



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

FACULTY OF ARTS

THE SEMIOSPHERES OF PREJUDICE IN THE FANTASTIC ARTS

**THE INHERITED RACISM OF IRREALIA
AND THEIR TRANSLATION**

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Abstract

This study discusses the evolution of racialized concepts in the genres of the fantastic, especially fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural horror. It provides the first detailed interpretation of how such concepts are constructed and how they develop based on their interaction with the evolving cultural landscapes, thus showing how characteristics are borrowed from real world cultural stereotypes. The analysis concentrates on fantastic renderings of racialized stereotypes based on real world cultural fears. The concepts are examined both in their source cultures and through the lenses of transmediality and translation. As the fantastic arts have always been heavily transmedial in nature, the study is not limited to a certain art form, but views all media as complementary in producing concepts of the fantastic, either by adding new facets to the concepts, or by changing them on a temporal basis.

Contextualizing concepts in the fantastic arts through their linkage to the real world cultural development provides a method through which we can perceive how the concepts are built on – and preserve – racialized stereotypes of their cultures of origin. In order to do so, this study provides a framework that utilizes several approaches from cultural semiotics as well as translation studies. Furthermore, it presents a view of the evolution of the genres in specific media through case studies. The framework is applied to some well-known fantastic concepts (*orcs*, *dwarves*, *goblins*, and *gnomes*), by mapping their entry into the fantastic arts and examining how the changes in their signifying imagery have affected their allusive links to the real world stereotypes that are (intentionally or non-intentionally) portrayed through them. In addition, translational tools are applied in a case study to examine how racialized features are transported to a new cultural setting in translation.

The study argues that the inclusion of properties of racialized stereotypes from real world cultures to fantastic concepts is widespread and that especially negative racialized allusions often survive in texts of the fantastic, even after they have been perceived as offensive in the real world cultures from which they stem. It displays how racialized narratives can change when fantastic concepts inherit properties from new real world racialized stereotypes, and how inheriting signifiers from a “positive” real world racialization can affect the negative properties of fantastic concepts.

Keywords: semiotics, fantasy, science fiction, game studies, transmediality, racism

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With gratitude,

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PREFACE

“Well, you have forgotten the meaning of imposing artificial values.
It’s really useful!” – Unidentified character in the webcomic *Oglaf*

“Orcs don’t cry.” – Coilla in *Legion of Thunder*

“Why are those orcs always so evil?” my daughter asked me once as I was reading Kersti Juva’s Finnish translation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* to her as a bedtime story. No, they aren’t, I thought, and tried to elaborate: there must be good orcs somewhere, orcs just minding their business, building their homes, enjoying orcish theater perhaps, and caring for their children. “But if some orcs are good, how can the heroes just kill them without checking whether they are good or bad,” she wondered.

A problematic question: early fantasy and science fiction – and practically all genre literature – have shortcuts in their morals by color-coding ethics as black and white. This coding has been quite literal: black has been the color of evil and white the color of good, from clothes to skin, and often in absolute terms. While heroes have been allowed their moments of greed or selfishness, true evil has tended to be absolute – and black.

After reading *The Hobbit* to my daughter, I started revisiting other childhood favorites, and none painted a better picture. Practically all contained the same images, from the evil (and black) dark elves of the *Dragonlance* novelizations to the presentation of monsters in H.P. Lovecraft’s straightforwardly racist fiction.

While this period racism can be partially understood in the context of the early twentieth century in which many of the tropes originate, the real issue is how the tropes were ingrained in subsequent works and in the actual grammar – in the semiotic meaning of the word – of the genres. The features related to blackness and racial stereotypes have been woven into the fabric of the genres, carrying imagery loaded with dated racial values into the fabric of today’s fiction.

I became interested in the following questions: How did racialized imagery become ingrained in fantastic fiction? How does the evolution of the genres affect it? How does it change in translation between languages and cultures? Since much of the imagery is based on either colonialist roots or racial stereotyping and reflects the portrayals of minorities, how is it changed when societies evolve and texts are translated between different cultures?

Like Severian, the protagonist of Gene Wolfe’s (Wolfe 2000: 14) *Book of the New Sun*, notes: “We believe that we invent symbols. The truth is that they invent us [...] it is profound mistake to believe that we must know of such things to be influenced by them.” Culture is built on culture, and fiction on earlier fiction. References and allusions may be lost in time, but they still guide conceptions that arise in our cultural products as pre-

anchored signifiers. What we have learned by reading and watching fiction, by playing games, and through all the cultural products that have built on earlier cultural products influences us, whether we know of their original cultural anchors or not.

Genre literature has a transmedial history: texts have been adapted into films, games, and for television, and readapted to other media again and again. Thus, I adopt a transmedial viewpoint in this study, which I would claim has benefitted the study considerably as racialized portrayals are often best visualized in their adaptations.

I hope this text will provide readers with some answers, as well as a view of the mechanics of how fantastic concepts and their translations develop or fail to develop.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since their conception, literature and the other arts have defined the borders of humanity. They have defined who and what behavior are deemed human, and conversely, which groups are thrust outside of what is counted as humanity. Folklore, folk tales, and epics have defined unwanted human characteristics and racial groups as monster-like nonhumans, and ancient histories as well as modern propaganda have ascribed nonhuman practices to marginalized ethnic groups. In the modern transmedial arts of the fantastic – including fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural horror, among others – the externalization of ethnicity into races of the fantastic has peaked, as fantastic nonhumans have been created or have evolved based on stereotypical readings of real world cultures and ethnicities.

This study focuses on discussing and exploring the techniques of such concepts in the fantastic. These fantastic concepts, to be called *irrealia*¹ in this study, are created and evolve not only in the bounds of their original works, but in a complex interplay between original and subsequent works, as well as various genres of the fantastic, and their reflective culture. When read in another culture or translated to another language, new layers of interplay are usually added. Fantastic worlds and concepts evolve through connections between texts and a complex net of dialogue that encompasses different arts, not just through individual reader interpretations. Hence, I look beyond literature, examining other media and paratexts, such as book covers, games, and visual arts.

In this study, I explore two interlinked subjects: (1) the evolution of the *irrealia*, and (2) their translation to other languages and cultures. My aim is to show both how the concepts themselves have evolved, and to what extent their origins and potential evolution are apparent in their translation. *Irrealia* are concepts of the fantastic, concepts that could not exist outside the arts of the fantastic (e.g. *orc*, *elf*, *dwarf*, *phasers*, or *shoggoth*), and which can, by themselves, define a text as belonging to one or more of the genres of the fantastic.² I focus on *irrealia* that have their roots in *abjectness* – abjects as opposed to the subjects, in the sense that they are never shown as viewpoint characters, but existing only to portray values deemed filthy, despicable, or evil in their original culture. My main focus, then, is on *irrealia* that have their roots in racism, in other words, on cases where the origin and development of *irrealia* have been affected by *abjectness* in the source culture.

¹ Singular *irrealis*.

² See 2.1.3. Naturally, some of the concepts used as *irrealia* in the fantastic are also used beyond the genres of the fantastic; *wizard*, for example, has its uses in mainstream culture. However, using *wizard* in a fantastic text carries a specific meaning that invokes full meaning as *irrealis*.

Abjectness is retained in contemporary arts of the fantastic through a variety of means. For example, when a reader of contemporary fantasy or science fiction is presented with a greedy merchant race (e.g. the banker goblins of the *Harry Potter* novels or the Ferengi in *Star Trek* television series), the portrayal of these characters – especially in the visual arts – largely resembles the racist portrayal of Jews in earlier mainstream fiction. Similarly, in fantasy and science fiction, physical descriptions of evil races match the racist imagery of black Africans in colonial literature, and evil is often still tied to the darkness of the skin color of the characters. In many cases, even some of the original portrayals are most likely unintentional,³ and in such cases they tend to be the result of the influence of earlier authors and publishers on the development of the jargon and concepts of the genres. I will explore the origin and development of these concepts through examples in various media such as literary texts, comics, films, non-digital games (roleplaying games and miniature games), and video games.

In this study, I use theories and tools from literary studies, semiotics, translation studies, and transmedial studies in trying to create a coherent model for portraying and analyzing irrealia in the fantastic arts. When analyzing the development of irrealia, I at times use separate theoretical tools to examine the selected irrealia, that is, the tools best suited for each case study. I also include a case study (chapter 5) on translating an extract of the fantastic from English to Finnish. Other language pairs require further study, and additional studies of texts translated from English to Finnish may provide further insights into the functioning of the mechanics of translating fantastic concepts, especially on the temporal positioning of the source and target texts in the reflective cultures.

1.1 Irrealia in the Fantastic

Fantasy and science fiction offer an insightful viewpoint into the societies of the periods they are written in. This applies both in literary texts and transmedial renditions. The tropes, ideas, and concepts of fantastic literature have evolved for over a century,⁴ borrowing from folklore, everyday culture, and current ideas of the future. Along with the texts themselves, the tropes have adapted to new technologies and changes in societies, addressing the latest innovations and social issues, often questioning current political and societal trends in ways that realistic art has rarely done. For example, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) offer insightful views into fears of a backlash against the liberalization of society in ways that go beyond realism.

Similarly, Doris Lessing's *The Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire* (1983) thematizes political rhetoric by Swiftian satire enhanced through science fiction tropes.

³ Compare the commentaries of the authors, for example Tolkien's comments as described in my discussion of the *dwarf* irrealis in 4.2.2.

⁴ Some, naturally, are much older – many concepts of the fantastic have their roots in oral folklore, as I will discuss in the case studies.

The televised re-rendition of *Battlestar Galactica* (2004–2009) alludes to, among other things, the suicide bombings after the Second Gulf War (2003) by placing suicide bombers as the protagonists and exploring their motivations – which at the time would most likely have been very much unacceptable in the United States in any realistic genre. As Doris Lessing (2002: 3) has noted in her preface to *Shikasta*: “space fiction, with science fiction, makes up the most original branch of literature now; it is inventive and witty; it has already enlivened all kinds of writing; and literary academics and pundits are much to blame for patronizing or ignoring it – while of course by their nature they can be expected to do no other.”

While scholarship into the arts of the fantastic has been abundant in the last five decades, there has been surprisingly little transmedial research and practically no research on fantastic concepts and their evolution within the fields of the fantastic. Concepts such as *orcs*, *phasers*, *Cthulhu*, *Klingons*, *wizards*, *goblins*, *elves*, *warp drive*, *death star*, *hobbits*, *Frankenstein’s monster*, and *Dyson sphere* have been either created or popularized⁵ through the fantastic arts, and fantastic concepts originating in the past centuries have survived and evolved to become part of present mainstream cultures. Often these concepts echo the fears and anxieties of their parent cultures from the time of their creation, and they have retained elements from their origins to this day.

I will start by analyzing the concepts of irrealia and concentrate on how stereotypical racial imagery from the cultures and times in which these concepts originated have survived and evolved in the fantastic arts. In many cases, such imagery could no longer be found in realistic fiction, at least not in such abundance (or would cause a stir if used), but the mechanisms through which fantastic concepts are used have allowed them to thrive and become ingrained in fantastic fiction. I analyze the *irrealia* (see 2.1.3) – through the lens of the *semiospheres* (see 2.1.1) of the fantastic. I do so by exploring case studies of four irrealia for the development of partially interlinked irrealia with racist or racial undertones: *orcs*, *goblins*, *gnomes*, and *dwarves* presented as *the other* or abjectified *monstrous others*. Such concepts exemplify the *semiospheric containment* (see 2.1.5) of racial – or even racist – imagery in the genres.

Literature is not an isolated medium and thus cannot be studied as if it existed in a vacuum – and nowhere is this as clear as in the genres of the fantastic. Literary texts have been adapted into films for over a century, and the interaction between fiction and drama has gone on for centuries. Novels are visualized in games and films, and the movement is not one-way, since films are adapted as novels or television series, and games are made into films which are adapted as literary texts. Specific literary irrealia are given forms in paratexts, toys, and comics, and newer texts are affected by these transmedial adaptations.

⁵ Some of these concepts were generated before or outside genre fiction and were taken into use in genre fiction after having been widely used in, for instance, scientific discourse, mainstream culture, or folklore. However, as argued below, the modern view of these concepts tends to derive from their use in the genres of the fantastic.

For example *Star Wars*,⁶ which started as a film trilogy, continued its life through numerous toys, comics, literary adaptations, and games before returning to film in 1999 With *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. Studying only one medium would severely thwart the study of the semiospheres of the fantastic and the evolution of irrealia, hence a transmedial approach is needed. Thus, the term *text* is used in a broad sense in this study, and refers to any kind of fiction, whether a novel, short story, film, game, an episode of a television series, or a theatrical performance. Book covers, marketing artwork, film posters, game concept art, and similar artefacts are discussed as *paratexts* (see 2.1.4). The only exception to this are purely physical artefacts with no inherent narrative features, such as statues or toys, which are mostly left outside the scope of this dissertation.

The irrealia discussed in this study mostly originate in literature. However, as I track the evolution of the irrealia through various interlinked media, I also consider the evolution of the genres of the fantastic in the other arts. Unlike literature, the history of the genres of fantasy, supernatural horror, and science fiction are relatively easy to track in films, comics, and games. This is naturally helped by the relatively short timespan the genres have existed in other media.

It should be noted that outside chapters 3.2–3.3, I give limited space to the genre of horror, as the main irrealia discussed in this study belong most solidly to the genre of fantasy, with brief digressions into science fiction. As a secondary scope restriction, the discussions below are Anglocentric, as this study concentrates on the European and American semiospheres of the fantastic. In a wider scope, the anime (in television and film) and manga (in comics) genres of Japan, for example, could not be ignored, and it can be surmised that their influence on their European and US counterparts will soon be extensive enough that leaving them out in the future will be as impossible as leaving out media other than literature would be at this time. However, in terms of the discussion of the irrealia selected for the purpose of this study, it seems proper to limit the scope to mainly (but with some exceptions) European and American media.

1.2 Semiotic Translation

Why are the semiospheric containment and evolution of irrealia or elements of irrealia relevant for translation studies? From an analytical point of view, I would claim that the importance cannot be overstated. The study of the translation of fantastic literature has been widely neglected in translation studies, despite of the popularity of these genres and the unique translation problems they present. However, as the study of fantasy and science fiction arts has emerged during the past half century, studying the translations of these genres is slowly becoming more viable. Translation problems related to fantasy and science fiction literature have often been assessed as peripheral issues. The reason for this has not been marginal sales or lack of cultural impact, as the genres have included

⁶ The first film was later retitled *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977), followed by *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983).

bestselling texts that have been culturally present in many languages for over a century. More likely the reason has been the canonization of realism as the main mode of mainstream literature, which has led to the marginalization of genre fiction, such as pulp romances, science fiction, fantasy, and detective stories.

Translation, as Per Qvale (2000: 1) has noted, is an inherently semiotic discipline. Both the source and the target texts, as well as their authors, publishers, translators, and readers, exist within specific cultural frameworks which are penetrated by the translation process – even in the best regarded translations, cultural nuances include subtle differences between readings of the source and the target texts. Translating fiction is rarely centered on simply bringing a text from one language to another. Rather, it entails translating the full semiosis of the fiction, including the influences of the source culture, the conventions of the literary genre, and the very culture specific allusions and metaphors of the source culture. A proficient translator needs to consider the subtle nuances of the text and the *semiospheres* (see 2.1.1) it belongs to – sometimes by domesticating them, sometimes by foreignizing them even further. Thus, translators need to prioritize specific semiotic properties of even single concepts to decide which to translate past the cultural gap.

Nowhere is this as notable as in literary science fiction and fantasy. The two interlinked genres add another dimension of cultural semiosis to the translation process – that of irrealia (see Lopenon 2009: 166–167): fictional and imagined cultures and cultural concepts. This dimension is not an independent one. Rather, it overlaps and interacts with the author's primary cultural semiospheres in many ways, evolving and changing as cultural changes affect the primary cultural semiospheres. Neither is it stable: as new texts are written, fantastic concepts keep evolving, and new interpretations force new readings on old texts.

In order to be able to study translation issues specific to the genres of the fantastic – that is, fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural horror – we need to study the creation and evolution of genre defining irrealia both as products of the main cultural semiospheres that they were created in and the semiospheres of the fantastic that they define and are defined by. However, texts belonging to the above genres are deeply rooted in their source cultures and often make essential use of their source cultures through metaphor, analogy, and mimetic allusion. This makes the texts themselves – and especially their translation to a new language and culture – an appealing object of study from the viewpoint of cultural semiotics.

As Andrew Chesterman (1997: 162) notes, “semiotics, too, might usefully enter the curriculum at this point, as a discipline offering a general conceptual framework in which matters translatorial can be pondered.” While semiotics presents a multitude of compatible theories and ideas for use in translation studies, multidisciplinary applications between the two fields were for a long time few and far between. However, during the last two decades, such affiliations have become a major influence, and there is now a fruitful area of studies combining the two fields. Examples include Dinda L. Gorlée's (2004) use of Charles S. Peirce's semiotics as translation aids, Jacques Derrida's views on translation studies (not least as applied by Venuti 2004), and Chesterman's (1997, 2002) translatorial

notions, as well as the contributions of Umberto Eco, Pirjo Kukkonen, and Peeter Torop, to name a few.

As semiotics does not present a single unified theory but provides numerous interwoven and sometimes exclusionary theories and methods, it offers a wealth of frameworks and tools for the use of translation studies. These will be made use of and discussed in chapter 2.

1.3 Aims of the Study

In this study, I aim to answer the following three questions:

1. How are real world racialized – or racist – stereotypes and imagery preserved in fantastic irrealia?

I explore several fantastic concepts with racial or racist roots and undertones in the real world cultures of their creation, and discuss the cultural roots that have led to the fact that specific elements are contained in irrealia. Limiting the discussion to the evolution of racial or racist imagery in irrealia seems called for in order to set the scope, so I will discuss the evolution of irrealia in the semiospheres of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I examine how irrealia in the contemporary genres of the fantastic retain elements from their real world origins, and the aspects of significance (semiotically speaking) that they have received through their evolution. This is important, since many of the original irrealia in the genres were conceived at a time in which the public discourse and language use differed vastly from today's cultural norms in terms of, for example, ethnic minorities, religion, or cultural customs, such as marriage or same-sex relationships. The fact that such elements have been retained has led to signs in the fantastic genres that would be deemed racist or sexist in other genres today. In some cases, such signs have become "neutralized" signs of the genres and are used routinely even by the most liberal and progressive authors of the genres. In order to portray the roots of racial or racist signs in irrealia, I discuss the origin of the genres of the fantastic, as well as the evolution of the genres in the first decades of the twentieth century (see 3.1–3.2), highlighting specific authors as cases in point (see 3.3).

2. How do real world stereotypes within irrealia change with the evolution of the genres?

In exploring the evolution of irrealia within the genres of the fantastic, my aim is to create a model for analyzing the evolution of specific irrealia in their original cultural semiospheres. I apply this model to four irrealia in case studies, concentrating on irrealia with racial imagery linked to allusions that draw on real world prejudices, and try to provide a framework for their cultural growth from their origin to the current state. In the case studies, I focus on the *orc*, *goblin*, *dwarf*, and *gnome* irrealia along with their history and evolution, and the specific real world racial stereotypes with which the irrealia have

been associated. As fantasy is highly transmedial, my theory and case studies cover multiple media in creating a model for the study of irrealia and their evolution (chapter 2), including the specific irrealia presented in the case studies (chapter 4).

3. How are the stereotypes transferred between cultures when texts of the fantastic are translated?

My aim is to present a model for analyzing the translation of irrealia, framing the model so that it will include and utilize my first and second aims. In order to display how the allusions linked to racialized imagery are handled in translation, I pinpoint the evolution of fantastic irrealia in translations, and the effect of the culture dependent allusions on the translation of such concepts. Finally, in order to illustrate the mechanics of translating irrealia, I present a case study, where I examine the orc irrealis and its signifiers of abjectness in *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) and its Finnish translation (1973–1975).

1.4 The Structure of the Study

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical basis of the study. My methods are based on Yuri Lotman's semiospheric model (2.1.1) within a Saussurean semiotic framework of the interplay of the *signified* and the *signifier* (2.1.2). The core concept of the study, *irrealia*, is contextualized within the frames provided by Lotman and Algirdas Julien Greimas (2.1.3). Furthermore, I explore Lubomír Doležel's (1998) and Marie-Laure Ryan's (1991) notion of readers saturating the gaps of a text by the technique of *minimal departure* (2.1.4), combined with Gérard Genette's concepts of related texts such as paratexts affecting the core text, and Matt Hills's (2002) and Michael Saler's (2012) notions of how a coherent semiotic fictional totality is created by readers (2.1.4). I go on to expand the theory with the concept of *semiospheric containment* (2.1.5) when studying how specific components can remain "contained" within an irrealis. Transmediality in the fantastic (2.1.5) is discussed before analyzing the development of irrealia deeper through a model of existential analysis (2.1.6). Before going on to theoretical synthesis, I study the background to the selected translation theories and strategies (2.2.1), the translation of cultural semiospheres (2.2.2), and translation tools (2.2.3).

Chapter 3 introduces the field of the fantastic, by defining the literature of the fantastic (3.1), by going deeper into areas relevant for this study, in analyzing how racial stereotypes became commonly used in the fantastic (3.2), and by providing examples of authors through whose works racial – or racist – descriptions were normalized in fantastic fiction (3.3).

In chapter 4, I analyze the origin and evolution of four irrealia (*orc*, *goblin*, *dwarf*, and *gnome*) within the semiospheres of the fantastic, and discuss the origins of abjectness in the *orc* irrealis and the evolution of real world racial connotations and references in the irrealia through its evolution (4.1). I compare and contrast the *goblin*, *dwarf*, and *gnome*

irrealia, and provide reflections on the evolution of racial stereotypes in a fantastic guise (4.2).

Chapter 5 starts with an overview of the history of translation of the fantastic into Finnish (5.1). Then I move on to study the translation of the orc *irrealis* in in *The Lord of the Rings* into Finnish, concentrating on racialized signifiers of abjectness, such as depictions of skin color and colonial descriptions of racial otherness. My aim is to study how the transfer of such elements functions when original irrealia are transferred between different real world cultural semiospheres, as well as to a secondary cultural semiosphere (of fantasy) that does not yet include the irrealia.

2 FRAMEWORK

Analytical tools are needed in order to untangle the complex web of interrelated transmedial texts and the perceptions and readings they have spawned. The concepts and models used in literary studies, though useful, are insufficient for the task at hand. The semiospheres of the fantastic are created and populated through various interlinked media, and as irrealia items evolve transmedially, it is necessary to adapt and apply analytical tools from various schools of semiotics, as well as film studies, transmedial studies, fandom studies, and game studies.

2.1 Constructing Fantastic Semiospheres

2.1.1 Semiospheres of the Fantastic

Lotman (2005; 1990b: 123–125, 131–136) proposes the concept of *semiosphere* to explain the totalities of cultural norms, conventions, rules, and texts of a culture. According to Lotman, a semiosphere contains all texts and works produced in a culture or a cultural subset as well as a culturally constructed grammar which regulates and guides the interpretation and creation of its texts. The semiosphere reflects our ability to memorize information into coexisting, interdependent, and intertextually linked categories. As a concept, semiosphere is particularly useful when attempting to overcome challenges relating to context and interdependences.

For example, we can discuss the semiosphere of *the fantasy genre*, which contains the stylistic concepts, conventions, intertextual references, and fantastic concepts typically used in creating texts in this genre. This semiosphere contains various interlinked smaller semiospheres, such as those of the subgenres *pulp fantasy*, *sword and sorcery*, and *feminist fantasy*. Other examples of semiospheres could be *opera*, *classical music*, *science fiction*, *crime fiction*, or *British comedy*. Each of them contains its own set of rules and conventions – at any particular point of time – by which anyone competent in the semiosphere can read and understand the texts it contains. Of course, anyone can enjoy a piece of classical music or read a science fiction novel, but without competence in the specific semiosphere, a specific *literacy*, much of the contents and meanings of the text will be lost. When reading a text, each reader with at least some relevant literacy can understand the semiosphere – or semiospheres – to which the text belongs, and decipher the meanings in the text.

According to Lotman's cultural semiotics, each text in any culture is at least doubly coded, that is, written according to the rules of at least two grammars (Lotman 1990a: 293–294; 1990b: 151–152). The first coding is that of the natural language through which the text is performed or written. The second coding is created as semiosphere specific cultural code, the “secondary language” of culture, which has its own grammar and terminology. From the point of view of fantasy and science fiction literature (including their subgenres), this double coding is highly important. Even though texts are based on a

primary code such as English or Chinese, the genre specific semiosphere creates another semiotic level – a cultural code in which fluency is required to successfully read texts belonging to it.

As a mass of texts contributing to a wider reading of specific texts within it, semiosphere is close to the concept of *megatext*, and in the field of science fiction studies, *SF megatext* (see e.g. Attebery 1992, Broderick 1995, and Vint 2014). As Sheryl Vint (2014: 57) notes, “sf explicitly refers back to earlier instances of itself, each text adding to and playing with a larger body of signs, images, and scenarios that make up sf’s shared world.” The same can, of course, be said of any other popular fiction genre – not only fantasy and supernatural horror and their various subgenres, but of romance, Western fiction, and any other genre. Just as in semiospheres, Vint (2014: 57) claims that “certain prominent texts become dense centers of gravity, pulling the meaning of icons toward their influential formations.” She also argues (2014: 57–58) that “this conception of genre requires a certain kind of apprenticeship of both reader and writer to fully perceive the complex web of meanings evoked by certain words, images, and scenarios.” In this study, the decision to use semiosphere instead of megatext or just genre is based on the all-encompassing nature of semiospheres: unlike megatext or genre, which are concepts that rely on texts building on each other and creating meaning through the interplay between earlier and later texts, semiospheres (like the biospheres they draw their name from) encompass a wide range of influencing actors outside the texts themselves. Megatexts are a continuous evolution on texts building on themselves, while semiospheres are in constant inter- and intraplay between semiospheric aspects, with texts, reader response, reader interplay, and reader-author interaction continuously affecting the temporal state of the semiosphere. Likewise, the *genre of fantasy* can be seen to compass the texts of the genre, while the *semiosphere of fantasy* can be seen to contain the interplay between texts, readers, authors, and the interaction with other relevant semiospheres, e.g. real world cultural semiospheres, and the semiospheres of science fiction and fantastic horror.

Texts of the fantastic rarely belong to only one single semiosphere, and they can be coded through multiple semiospheres. Similarly, a semiosphere is not a static construct: it evolves over time, as new texts add new concepts, as older texts become less prominent, and as the relevance of any text within the semiosphere is challenged. Peripheral texts can become central as times change, and central texts can drift into obscurity, thus affecting the very grammar of the semiosphere. This means that an audience competent in a semiosphere at one point of time will interpret specific works in the semiosphere through a different lens than a similarly competent audience at a different point in time. Naturally a person’s fluency in one semiosphere affects her interpretations of other semiospheres, whether linked to the specific semiosphere or not. Literacy in a semiosphere requires knowledge of the evolution of the semiosphere, its sub-semiospheres, and the larger cultural semiospheres it belongs to.

By way of Lotman’s definition, the concept of semiosphere can easily be adapted for two purposes in the study of the fantastic: First, it can provide a common context through which to view the building blocks of the fantastic – and their interdependences –

in terms of a specific fictional world or culture. Second, semiospheres can be used as genre and subgenre specific frameworks that explain how readers of fantasy and science fiction saturate individual texts of the genres with familiar concepts and preconceptions (see 2.1.4).

2.1.2 Signifiers and Signifieds

As noted above, Lotman's (1990b: 123–126, 203–204) cultural semiotics views texts both as foundations of cultural codes and subsets, cultural sublanguages, and as the products of these sublanguages (see below). According to Lotman (2005), the meanings contained in a text are created both within and by its source culture, which it partly creates itself. The meanings are created on a culture specific basis during the collective interpretation process. In discussing concepts of the fantastic, Lotman's model is especially useful when combined with Saussurean semiotics.

In Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics (e.g. Saussure 1983), every concept we interpret or understand as a concept is called a *sign*. Signs consist of two components: their material *signifier* and their conceptual *signified* (Saussure 1983: 65–66, Sebeok 2001: 5–6).⁷ Signifiers such as spoken or written words are used to evoke the signified of any concept in the receiving minds; in short, regardless of the medium, *signifiers* are transmitted to the receiver, who interprets them as *signifieds*. While Saussure's model discusses signifiers mainly as physical components such as sounds, written text, or gestures (Sebeok 2001: 6), they can be understood as any signal that causes (at least for some of the) recipients of the signal to form the signified in their minds.

Let me, however, add two clarifications to the way I will use Saussurean signs in this study. First, as the racial stereotyping in the irrealia I study, and especially in antisemitism in the dwarf, gnome, and goblin irrealia, the signifieds of racial stereotypes depend on an accumulation of multiple signifiers that together create the signified, and together create the sign. What is more, in my view of adaptations (see 2.1.5), different media aim at producing the same signifieds through varying, media based sets of signifiers. Second, my distinction between signifier and signified goes against how Saussure perceived of the pairing, though such a separation has been quite widely used in poststructural semiotics, e.g. with the concept of the *receding signified*, e.g. in Vahabzadeh (2003: 93–96) or Banerjee (2014: 160). Although I stray from poststructuralism in most cases in this study, this separation between the signifier and signified is a necessary – or at least useful – concept with irrealia that evolves over time and can transfer between media.

My choice of Saussurean semiotics may lead to a valid question: Why select Saussure's model instead of a newer semiotic framework, or even one based on that of

⁷ It must be noted that to Saussure (1983: 66), the arbitrary material component relating to a concept was primarily a vocal component, a *signal* that triggered the idea of the concept in a listener's mind, i.e. the uttered word *dog* bringing the concept of dog to the listener's mind.

Saussure's contemporary Peirce, whose theory of semiosis would give greater room to maneuver by flexibility through its added dimensions to deconstruction of the sign? This question is even more relevant as I go – as noted above – against Saussure's views on using his model. Nevertheless, as my main object is to illuminate the functioning of the creation and evolution of irrealia and not the semiotic interaction within the signs, Saussure's semiotics seems the most efficient way of interpreting the processes within the signs.

As noted by Sheryl Vint, in science fiction, many signs in the genre differ from those in common use in a language. Signs always receive their meaning from "conventions shared between the reader and the writer" (Vint 2014: 55), and in science fiction (and the other genres of the fantastic), the signified part of the sign is more or less subjectively interpreted. She argues that "parts of this system are always absent; the reader must interpolate a world of referents that exceed analogues that might be found in his or her material world" (Vint 2014: 55). In other words, the signifiers are shared, while the signifieds are interpreted subjectively (or intersubjectively), based on the readers' understanding of the genre.

Of course, typical Saussurean semiotics does not consider signifiers and signifieds to be necessarily linked when comprehended: a Saussurean signifier can be linked to the signified with an arbitrary linguistic (vocal) link with no descriptive properties. In this study, however, for the purpose of exploring the structure of irrealia, I have taken the liberty to somewhat widen the traditional role of the signifier. Furthermore, as I have chosen to explore specific irrealia as complex signs (rather than as groups of interlinked signs, of which they can also arguably consist of), I will make a change to the typical Saussurean notation. Instead of using the typical "Sign = (Signifier | Signified)" form as commonly used in Saussurean semiotics, I will use "Sign = (Signifier $x^1 \dots x^y$ | Signified)." Also, as racial stereotypes are only parts of an irrealis, the meaning of a sign will often consist of "Sign = (Signifier $x^1 \dots x^y$ | Signified)¹ + (Signifier $x^1 \dots x^y$ | Signified)² + ... etc." Although this approach can be seen as a neo-formalistic approach, it allows the examination of fantastic irrealia as individual signs and the examination of how these signs evolve by dropping, adding, and reanchoring specific signifiers.

In this study, the signifiers of fantastic concepts can be actual textual components, gaps, paratexts, or allusive connotations that define the concepts from within or without. For example, within a text placed in a fantastic world, an allusive description of a real world culture specific realia in the bounds of a fictional culture can link the fictional culture to the real world one and provide readers with hints on how to decipher elements of the fictional culture, even when this is not intended. These signifiers can be assigned by the author, or interpreted by the readers, or seen through the conventions of the real world cultures and subcultures to which the text alludes. What a specific text, passage, or phrase means to the author or the reader is rarely self-explanatory even within a specific field of studies, and multiple levels of meaning can be layered in a text by both author(s) and readers, depending on their cultural competence or lack thereof.

Saussurean semiotics perceives language as consisting of two layers that together produce meaning: *langue* or the grammar of the language and *parole* or the speech based on the grammar (Sebeok 2001: 135). As with signifiers and signifieds, the relationship between *langue* and *parole* is arbitrary but symmetrical (Lotman 2003: 81): texts are produced through the interplay of grammar that is defined by its use in speech that is defined by and in turn redefines the grammar. Recent semioticians have emphasized this interplay between the rules of language and the use of language in producing texts. The interplay between *signifiers* and *signifieds* creates signs, which in turn are used in the interplay of *langue* and *parole* when texts are created. Similarly, the interplay between texts and their readings creates an ongoing cultural (or subcultural) process of creation, interpretation, recreation, and reinterpretation of meaning on all levels from simple signs to culture defining and culture defined texts. I will use this multi-layered dichotomy to illustrate the evolution of *irrealia* in my case studies, especially with the goblin, gnome, and dwarf *irrealia* (see 4.2).

2.1.3 Irrealia

How can we define what is fantastic and what is not? And how do we study fantastic concepts as holistic, complex signs that are included in a number of texts from multiple authors? Fantastic concepts can be specific to a single text, or they can occur in the semiospheres of the fantastic and define entire subgenres. They can convey large amounts of genre specific information, and they can evolve and change by new reinterpretations based on changes in the real world cultural semiospheres in which they originate. For the study of these concepts, I have proposed the term *irrealia* (Loponen 2009: 166–167).⁸

As noted in my earlier work (Loponen 2009: 166), in translation studies, *realia* represent objects and concepts that are “culture bound” – that is, whose denotative or connotative significance is tied to their source culture, or whose value differs significantly in the target language (e.g. *sauna*, *toga*, *samovar*). The signifiers of *realia* are culture bound: only in their source culture do their signifiers point to the intended signifieds, and equivalent or even similar signifieds might not exist in other cultures. *Realia* anchor a text to a specific culture, period, or location, and present translators with challenges related to the domesticating and foreignizing effects of the translation process. As Ritva Leppihalme (2011: 126) notes:

In the broad sense then, references to *realia* may include not only references to material items (*machete*, *sari*, *gravad lax*) but also culture-bound notions and phenomena, such as religious or educational concepts, taboos, values, institutions, etc.

The main effects of *realia* in a text are twofold. First, they act as anchors that tie texts to their source cultures through denotative, connotative, and metaphorical links. While the

⁸ As mentioned above, unlike in my earlier text, here I use *irrealia* as plural and *irrealis* as singular.

denotative values of concepts may remain the same regardless of the culture,⁹ the connotative values, roles in culture, and allusive values can be culture dependent. Second, in translation, realia can be used for foreignizing impact by providing the reader with textual hints on filling gaps within a text: writing *czar* as *czar* (or in modified spelling, e.g. Finnish *tsaari*), for example, rather than domesticating it as *emperor*, will immediately give a reader aware of the semiosphere a textual clue, letting the reader place the text within a historical Russian setting.

The same effects can be said to apply to fantastic literature on multiple levels, but instead of – or rather, in addition to – realia tied to existing cultures, fantastic literature includes a concept similar to realia: a fantastic, fictional version of realia, with the challenges presented by the non-existence of the referred cultures, time periods, geographic locations, or related features. Thus, studying a fantastic setting as a holistic semiotic construct creates the need for a fictional, fantastic version of realia tied to the fictional setting. Such fantastic versions of realia, *irrealia*, define and determine the fictional cultural, geographical, and historical settings of the fictional world (see Loponen 2009: 167).

In fictional contexts, irrealia can act as cultural anchors of the fictional culture or setting, as they create implicit and explicit references that define the fictional culture or setting. The irrealia can tie the text to a specific genre or fictional setting (for example, *Gondor*, *kryptonite*, or *Nyarlathotep*), or mark a point of departure from our world or another fictional world (e.g. *two suns*, *zombie epidemic*, or *an orc police officer*). Although irrealia are fictional and fantastic by definition, they are also deeply rooted in their source culture through culture specific allusions, thus acting as pointers to their source culture and period. Irrealia can – purposefully or accidentally – denote semiotic indexicality or iconicity (to use concepts from Peircean semiotics) to tie them to cultural realia in their source cultures, or to external and internal cultural stereotypes in the source cultures. For example, Frank Herbert's science fiction novel *Dune* (1965), set on a desert planet in the distant future, uses Islamic and Arabic terms (or terms that sound as if they were derived from Arabic), such as *Mahdi*, *jihad*, and *erg*, throughout the novel to add Arabic connotations to the desert civilization portrayed in the novel. As noted in my earlier work (Loponen 2009: 167), irrealia act as the signs through which a fictional setting establishes its fictionality. That is, irrealia are signs through which the fictional world departs from the real world and announces its independence as fiction, as well as its intertextual relations to either other fictional worlds or sources in the real world.

It should be noted that irrealia do not replace realia. Rather, they are a separate semiotic category that can be used alongside realia. In many cases, especially in fantastic

⁹ However, there are exceptions. The denotative value of *sauna*, for example, differs in many cultures that have saunas. That is, the temperature, possible clothing worn while in sauna, humidity, and such vary from culture to culture. Moreover, the concept has culture specific variations, such as its possible connection to brothels in, for example, the United Kingdom. Even as recently as 2013, nearly a dozen saunas were linked to brothel activity in the media in Edinburgh alone.

literature based partially on the real world, irrealia are often used together with realia so as to blend domesticating and foreignizing elements. A Wild West inspired gunslinger with a *demon* revolver, a *shoggoth* in a *sauna*, or an *orc* drinking tea made in a *samovar* are examples of irrealia used alongside realia in order to provide readers with textual clues based on which they can imagine the fictional world.

In Saussurean terms, the concepts understood as irrealia can be seen as *signifieds* that are represented in texts through various *signifiers*, such as physical descriptions, dialogue, and visual presentations. To combine Saussure's concepts with Lotman's: when reading a text of a fantastic genre, an irrealis item is a sign that is constructed through the interplay of *signs* in the *langue* of the semiosphere, presented through the *signifiers* in the *parole* of the text. When a text gains foothold in the semiosphere, the *signifiers* used in the text referring to an irrealis can be seen to affect the *signified* of the irrealis in the *langue* of the semiosphere.

In many cases, irrealia are created through metaphoric or allusive interpretations within the semiosphere of the text (see 2.1.1) – or are present in the author's primary cultural semiospheres. As for fantastic literature, many metaphors and allusions can be directly linked to specific irrealia in the semiospheres of the text, and some may be used to establish the position of the text within the semiospheres. Irrealia are neither self-contained nor do they function fully independently outside the source cultures of their creation. Most of the irrealia in fantasy can be shown to have at least some roots in the folklore and myths of their source cultures, and many irrealia in science fiction are based on the anxieties and stereotypes present in their source culture's semiospheres (see chapter 4). *Positive* irrealia tend to contain values that seem to be regarded as positive by the readers, while *negative* irrealia tend to contain values seen as abjective or harmful, or which mirror the fears or antipathies of the readers. Even though authors' values naturally do not have to reflect the values of their main cultural semiospheres (and any cultural semiosphere can have many opposing sets of values), the *langue* of a cultural semiosphere can determine what kind of *parole* can be added within an irrealis. For example, regardless of the mutually conflicting values of the cultural semiosphere of the United States in the early twentieth century, the *langue* of the main cultural semiosphere allowed for the *parole* of black skin to be used as a sign of evil characteristics in fiction. When a single irrealis item is formed in fantastic literature, it is often based on folklore, myths, real world anxieties, fears, or hopes in the cultural semiosphere. If the irrealis becomes part of the semiosphere of a fantastic genre or subgenre, in time it becomes self-referential, influencing further texts, and affecting the readers' interpretation of earlier texts. However, irrealia are not static: along with gaining self-referentiality, irrealia evolve, and in some cases their cultural anchors are defined and redefined as they become signifiers within the genre. I explore this phenomenon further in the case studies (see chapter 4).

Furthermore, to simplify how genres are constructed: it is my claim that irrealia *define* a text, whether it belongs to the genres of the fantastic. If a text contains one or more irrealis items, in most cases it belongs to the arts of the fantastic, and if it does not,

it belongs to non-fantastic genres.¹⁰ Others have discussed the same concept from a different angle. For example, Darko Suvin's (1979: 7–8) *novum* is a concept that could be seen as a subset of irrealia. It is a *new* technological, social, or political innovation or deviation unavailable in a realistic setting and original to the text in which it is introduced. A *novum* permeates the text, making a real difference in the story or setting. For Suvin, a *novum* reused is not a *novum* anymore, while I claim that it is exactly the reuse of irrealia that is the characteristic trait of all fantastic arts. In my view, then, genres and subgenres are born and shaped through copying. In other words, Suvin's concept of *novum* is based on his aim of separating unique texts of science fiction from the supposedly lesser texts that reuse original ideas, thus creating a borderline of respectability between “high brow” science fiction literature and the mass popular science fiction.

In fact, Hal Duncan (2014: 127–128) has introduced the concept of *alethic*¹¹ *quirk*, which encompasses much the same idea as irrealia: an alethic quirk is a varied set of functions and modalities that can provide a text its “fantasticity,” based on *alethic modality*: what could have happened. An alethic quirk is a quirk in the alethic modality, bringing “what could not have happened” into the text (Duncan 2014: 127). Although useful for analyzing the fantastic features of various texts, the concept of quirk approaches the fantasticity from a structural textual angle, which makes it useful for analyzing specific texts but not viable for analyzing the evolution and development of fantastic concepts in the semiospheres of the fantastic. What is more, the difference between a quirk and an irrealis lies in part in complexity. While a quirk can refer to different manifestations of the fantastic, with its separate functions and internal mechanisms, an irrealis item is binary. To put it simply, if a concept within a text is fantastic, it is an irrealis and can be studied as an irrealis, whether its roots are in cultural realia, earlier irrealia, or textual functions specific for the text in which it is used.

Furthermore, irrealia can have either a *unifying* or a *separating* function. A unifying irrealis is used to attach a text to – or set a text within – a specific body of texts that share the same fictional world or (sub-)genre. A separating irrealis is used to make the text depart from a perceived set of texts or to establish the text as belonging to a unique world or (sub-)genre. An example of unifying irrealis is the *orc*, a concept that primarily sets a text in the genre of Tolkienesque fantasy (although there are exceptions, as we shall see below).

An example of separating irrealis is, for example, China Miéville's *reforged* in *Perdido Street Station* (2000). In Miéville's fantasy world, criminals are punished by “reforging” them with animal or machine parts, thus creating an irrealis that alludes both to the real world concept of reforming criminals and to a fantastic concept of recreating or

¹⁰ This, of course, is a simplification: there are many genres, such as magical realism and an abundance of horror texts that play with hints of irrealia, which can in many cases be interpreted either as realia or irrealia.

¹¹ From Greek *ἀλήθεια*, meaning ‘truth.’

replacing body parts through magic and/or technology. As the irrealis of “the reformed” is provided with other unique irrealia alongside textual clues pointing toward medieval or Renaissance technology and suggesting the existence of magic within the fictional world, the combination of clues leads readers toward the idea of a new fictional world. This new world purposefully breaks its links with traditional fantasy through political allusion and the exclusion of traditional irrealia. Miéville’s text can be read as political fiction and/or non-traditional fantasy. For a reader well versed in fantastic texts but unversed in reading political fiction, the treatment of criminals in the text can be seen and interpreted as a fantasy element that emphasizes that the text does not belong in the mold of traditional fantasy. Similarly, for a reader well versed in political discourse, the treatment of the criminals can be seen as a political commentary against how criminals are ostracized and thrust outside humanity in our society – as well as a word play on “reforming” criminals.

Miéville’s example shows how separating irrealia can be employed to create new fantastic subgenres. Moreover, unifying and separating irrealia can be employed simultaneously to fill textual gaps in order to navigate a text toward a specific subgenre and/or to create a new subgenre. By processual introduction of realia and irrealia that act both as unifying and as separating elements, a text can guide the reader through the gaps by breaking free from specific genres and introducing clues through which proficient readers can set their expectations of the semiosphere – and fill further gaps in the text.

Irrealia can be divided into several main categories, mainly to illustrate the functions they can have in a text. Irrealia in each category can act as unifying or separating depending on their use in a text. For example, a *Star Trek* related irrealia (e.g. *phaser* or *warp drive*) can be unifying when tying the text to a *Star Trek* setting, or separating when presented in a medieval fantasy setting.

An easy way to categorize irrealia can be done by dividing them to functional categories. For the purpose of this study, I use the categories *world defining*, *(sub-)genre defining*, *unique*, and *common* or *genre spanning*. These categories can overlap, especially with unique irrealia becoming genre or world defining in subsequent texts, and genre defining irrealia becoming common irrealia once they blatantly cross the genre boundaries.

World defining irrealia can be used to define fantastic worlds in literary fiction, or to place fiction into a specific fictional world. The use of fictional irrealia such as *Klingon* places the text within the *Star Trek* fictional future, while *jedi* or *Darth Vader* places a text into the world of *Star Wars*, and *Gandalf* or *Galadriel* into J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth. World defining irrealia are used especially in licensed byproducts (toys,¹² games,

¹² It should be noted that for some franchises, toys (e.g. *Masters of the Universe* or *G.I. Joe*), games (e.g. *Dungeons & Dragons* or any other roleplaying franchise), or miniatures (e.g. *Warhammer*) are the main selling article, with narrative products such as game novelizations, video games, or other supplements existing mainly to support toy or miniature sales.

adaptations, etc.) and fan fiction. Similarly, world defining irrealia are used to create the *hyperdiegesis* (see 2.1.4) of the fictional world.

(Sub)genre defining irrealia – or more typically a set of irrealia – can in part set a work of fiction within a specific genre. For example, having *orcs*, *elves*, and *dragons* within a story can place the story typically in the realms of Tolkien-related fantasy¹³ – or, quite likely, modern “stock fantasy.” Similarly, using a specific set of irrealia can place a work in a subgenre of the fantastic (such as *new weird*, *slipstream*, *new wave*, etc.). For instance, Gene Wolfe’s *Book of the New Sun* (1980–1983) series¹⁴ starts off in a kind of a fantasy setting – all the while playing with Arthur C. Clarke’s (1973: 36) famous “third law”: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” Even though the text at first deceives the reader by only using irrealia of fantasy literature, it soon starts to use science fiction irrealia, carefully moving the books from fantasy to a subgenre of science fantasy, much like Jack Vance’s influential *Dying Earth* (1950–1984) series.¹⁵

Common or genre spanning irrealia include irrealia that have become so saturated that their appearance in a text cannot define either the (sub-) genre or the fictional world the text belongs to. An obvious example of this type of irrealia are H.P. Lovecraft’s cosmic monsters. Any number of creatures or concepts created by Lovecraft have been used in stock fantasy, science fiction, science fantasy, weird fiction, and supernatural horror, thus making the irrealia genre spanning and allusive only to their roots in supernatural horror, and losing their original connotations. The same development seems currently to be happening with orcs (as discussed in 4.1), which as irrealia are becoming multi-faceted to the point of having multiple inherently exclusive allusive references. That is, various versions of the irrealia have such different meanings that they are next to impossible to categorize under the same subgenre.

Unique irrealia are irrealia that have not existed in earlier texts of the fantastic. They may resemble earlier irrealia or share some characteristics of earlier irrealia, but they are presented as new irrealia that do not link the text to a genre, to earlier texts of the fantastic, or to a pre-existing fictional world. Such irrealia tend to have a separating function: they are used to set the text into a new fictional world or (sub-)genre by forcing the reader to imagine the irrealia from scratch. Although they can still be heavily allusive to other texts, the reader is denied the opportunity of using them to fill gaps in the fictional setting based on earlier texts in the semiosphere. Even though unique irrealia rarely have

¹³ To be sure, dragons and elves are figures from fantastic tales well before Tolkien. However, as their appearance in today’s texts of the fantastic relies very much on Tolkien’s use of the irrealia, *Tolkien-related* may seem a fair description.

¹⁴ Comprising *The Shadow of the Torturer* (1980), *The Claw of the Conciliator* (1981), *The Sword of the Lictor* (1982), and *The Citadel of the Autarch* (1983).

¹⁵ Comprising *The Dying Earth* (1950), *Eyes of the Overworld* (1966), *Cugel’s Saga* (1983), and *Rhialto the Marvelous* (1984).

a unifying function, there are nevertheless numerous examples of unique irrealia that are based on existing realia (instead of irrealia) and creating allusions to a specific historical or political setting – in this way essentially providing the unique irrealia with a unifying function. For example, Hannu Rajaniemi's posthumanist science fiction novel *The Quantum Thief* (2010) introduced the concept of *gogols*, human minds uploaded into a computer network to be used in masses as slaves of the operators of the networks. The concept of *gogol* was a unique irrealis, but it acted as an allusion to a fictional realia, that is Nikolai Gogol's novel *Dead Souls* (1842), in which the protagonist Chichikov buys dead serfs who are still in the registers of landlords as living people. The unique irrealis thus establishes a thematic of serfdom in the posthumanist context by linking uploaded human minds with Russian slavery.

It should be noted that the borders between irrealia and reality are not fixed. A *dodo* It should be noted that the borders between irrealia and reality are not fixed. A *dodo* can be a realia in a text portraying Australia prior to 1760, while in a story set into modern time, a living dodo would be an irrealia signifying, for instance, the effects of successful cloning, divine intervention, or other fantastic plot elements. Similarly, irrealia in old science fiction can become real later on. Examples of this include instant wireless communication, rockets, tablet computers, video calls, or supercomputers, all of which have been used as irrealia in older science fiction. At the time of publication, the status of irrealia in visual or audiovisual texts is usually easier to pin down, as irrealia tend to have a more conspicuous form and function.

As established in this section, irrealia can represent a number of concepts with varying functions within a text. Although irrealia can be defined simply as *any fantastic concept* or *any concept that makes a text fantastic*, they can be categorized and examined through the function and roles they have in a text. In the next sections, I will discuss the interplay of irrealia through the saturation of textual gaps, paratexts, and shared hyperdiegesis.

2.1.4 Other Central Concepts

Using the concept of semiosphere as a genre specific interpretation tool enables us to read of “inherited” irrealia and its terminology through a *fictional encyclopaedia* (Doležel 1998: 177). A fictional encyclopedia, an expansion of Umberto Eco's *semiotic encyclopaedia* (see Eco, Santambrogio, and Violi 1998: 22), is the knowledge amassed by readers in terms of the fictional setting constructed in a work of fiction. Readers construct the setting by *saturating* it with preconceptions and facts explicated (or implied) by the author, as well as their knowledge of the semiosphere through a saturation process. Drawing on the work of Wolfgang Iser, Doležel (1998: 169) explains: “When the author produces an explicit texture, he or she constructs a fictional fact” and “If no texture is written (zero texture), a gap arises in the fictional-world structure. Gaps [...] are a necessary and universal feature of fictional worlds.”

Although Doležel regards these fictional encyclopedias as more or less based on specific literary works, they can just as well be viewed as constructing blocks of irrealia or fantastic “facts” in the semiosphere of fantasy, science fiction, or their subgenres. For example, using a term such as *shoggoth* or *Cthulhu* – or describing fantastic creatures with related properties – places a work into the semiosphere of Lovecraftian horror, by providing the readers with a signal of the semiosphere they can use in order to construct and saturate the fictional world. These signals do not need to be explicit or abundant. Even minor clues regarding an existing archetype in the semiosphere of the fantastic will enable readers to saturate the world using their encyclopaedic knowledge of fiction.

The concept of irrealia can be fruitfully applied through the process of saturation to Lotman’s definition of semiosphere. For example, viewing Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* mythos as a unified whole enables the creation of a single semiosphere based solely on the irrealia of Tolkien (and subsequent authors and artists). This allows the readers of a text placed in the semiosphere to fill the gaps in the text with expectations founded on Tolkienesque fantasy, and enables translators to prioritize textual propositions through semiosphere specific expectations. Thus, although Middle-Earth as a semiosphere and a fictional world is constructed using not just the irrealia he created, the semiosphere of Tolkien-inspired fantasy is also based on such irrealia.

In her view of literary world-building, Marie-Laure Ryan, on the other hand, applies the genre-sensitive concept of *the principle of minimal departure* (Ryan 1991: 48–60). According to Ryan, readers take an active part in creating the fictional setting by taking their genre specific ideas of what the fictional world may be like, departing from those assumptions only when cued by the text to do so. Some authors use genre expectations as a mechanism for “shocking” their audience through major departures that rely on readers having interpreted the text through the principle of minimal departure. For example, the first chapters of Gene Wolfe’s critically acclaimed *The Shadow of the Torturer*¹⁶ (1980) have a setting and irrealia typical of the fantasy genre. Thus, the novel lets readers use their fictional encyclopedias to saturate the world with irrealia based on the fantasy genre, while dropping incremental hints that clash with that reader interpretation. The first overt hint, provided after the first chapters, enables readers to widen the scope of the departure they can make for their interpretation, thus allowing the reading to eventually switch to a science fiction setting.

Ryan’s concept is intertextually and transmedially sensitive: readers actively draw on their knowledge of a genre – in this study, the semiosphere of the genre – to construct a generic secondary world from which they can perform “departures” as cued by a specific text. In other words, Ryan’s model allows for cross-genre variations and clashes, as when a text combines Dracula with Frankenstein or Sherlock Holmes with Arsène Lupin (Ryan 1991: 55). In such cases, readers can combine their knowledge of both settings and

¹⁶ The first volume of *The Book of the New Sun* series (1980–1987).

intertwine them to fill the gaps – as Doležel would have it – and to read the intertextual work based on the combined semiosphere.

Since many works of popular fiction are serialized, and their creation is driven by economic considerations, it makes sense to leave room for expansion. Matt Hills (2002: 131–138) has pinpointed this by the term *endlessly deferred narrative* that can always be expanded. For example, new revelations of the Vulcan culture of Mr. Spock were a common occurrence in both the original *Star Trek* series and successive series and adaptations. Similarly, Henrik Örnebring (2007) discusses *syntagmatic gaps*, which can be filled in by fans, or by works using other media. In a sense, without such gaps, a text does not invite readers to participate in its co-creation. Michael Saler (2012: 33) explicitly views such gaps in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and J.R.R. Tolkien as adding depth and mystery to a fictional world and provoking readers' imagination and speculation. Tolkien (2000: 110) himself called this the *absence effect*.

Considering that even single-author classics of serialized fiction (e.g. Dumas, Dickens, or Verne) contain continuity errors, maintaining the coherence of an expanding transmedial *hyperdiegesis* (see 2.1.4) can be work-intensive. That is, as fictional worlds expand and evolve, conflicting information is almost inevitable. Sometimes such information is due to errors or later additions, but it can also be intentional. As a fictional world becomes better known, throw-away lines in an early chapter or episode can become problematic for subsequent storytelling. In some cases, such conflicting information is intentional or at least explained through diegetic mechanisms, such as dream sequences or unreliable narration. For example, the evolution and revisions of the fictional world in Glen Cook's *Black Company* (1984–) fantasy series are explained through different diegetic narrators, allowing the narrator characters to discuss previous errors, and providing the author with a means to change the settings and characters radically and explain explicitly conflicting information *a posteriori*.

The use of gaps and endlessly deferred narrative is common, with authors leaving gaps to be filled later as a conscious technique in the creation of a fictional world. Obviously, this strategy can also be used in the context of a single work, such as Robert A. Heinlein's xenophobic *Starship Troopers* (1959), where at the very end of the novel, the protagonist is revealed to be from the Philippines. Other examples include the numerous final plot twists in horror literature. However, it is also possible to purposefully leave gaps that can be filled later on by the author – or even a different author. For example, the popular television series *Lost* used such gaps throughout its six year run, even though by the end of the series it was obvious that the writers had not had a coherent plan, but were leaving gaps without forethought on how they might be bridged.

Works of genre fiction do not exist in isolation. Texts are complemented by meta-information and visualized through paratexts, adapted into films, turned into comic books, expanded in fan fiction, marketed as toys, and reimagined for new audiences in all modes of transmedial marketing and publishing. Attempting to capture the authentic idea of Lovecraftian horror, the definition of orcs, or the colloquial image of Sherlock Holmes is

difficult even in a single medium, let alone in the original text(s), if such can be identified.¹⁷

It can be questioned whether studying the semiospheres of fantasy through a transmedial lense can in fact have a negative impact. As noted by Roine (2016: 26): “The whole concept of transmediality has been criticised by researchers with an essentialist view on different media, where every mediated phenomenon is bound to its mediality, cultural context and perceptual circumstances.” However, Roine goes on to claim: “Even so, a close analysis of the expression or manifestation of practices such as worldbuilding between different forms of media can highlight the crucial features of the practices themselves” and a “transmedial approach can help us challenge and refine the concepts developed on the basis of quite limited material.” While I acknowledge that transmediality may bring its own burdens and limitations to this study, it would be impossible to illustrate the metamorphoses of irrealia between media – as well as media specific limitations and unique possibilities – without a transmedial approach.

Subsequent renditions influence what comes after, but also have a significant effect on the perception of the original work. But how does this work? How do portrayals and reader interpretations of a fictional work evolve over time and subsequent recreations? Much fiction – especially popular fiction – has become transmedial. Paratexts, adaptations, and translations change the interpretations of original texts. Secondary influences in later texts affect the audience’s ideas of previous works. So how do such influences function?

One key concept in including a text in the genre specific semiosphere is its *authenticity* (or seeming authenticity). Authenticity defines how centrally a text is seen to belong to – and affect – a semiosphere. Authenticity cannot be handled as a static concept: due to ever-increasing transmediality and an explosion in the ease of communication and the public spheres of the imagination it has fostered, the consensus-making processes that create power relations and define authenticity (i.e. the discourse within the semiosphere) have become more dynamic. In many arts, we can no longer rely on a consensus of an elite well-versed in a specific semiosphere to set a text’s position in its relevant semiosphere(s).

Authenticity is a relation between the reader (or the community of readers) and an accepted source of authenticity. In economic theory, Grayson and Martinec (2004: 297-299) define the indicators through Peircean terminology. *Indexical authenticity* occurs when readers believe that there is a link between what they encounter and whatever it is that is regarded as the source (i.e. “the original”). *Iconic authenticity* is used to describe something that is perceived as being similar to something that is indexically authentic.

¹⁷ This also brings up the concept of pastiche (see e.g. Nyqvist 2010), and a study of pastiche on the evolution of fantastic concepts might produce interesting results. However, as pastiche is inherently referring outwards (that is, explicitly referring beyond the current text), it is outside the aims of this study.

Grayson and Martinec do not have a category for *symbolic authenticity*, probably because as a category of authenticity it would mostly fail; symbolic authenticity would be difficult to read as actually authentic. Yet certain claims of authenticity are best described as symbolic. For example, in “official” sequels published decades later by unrelated authors, the relationship of authenticity between the new texts and the original ones can be seen as arbitrary or symbolic at best.

It is important to note that it is not only the perceived relation between the readers and the source that is being socially negotiated, but that the source itself is subject to discussion. Thus, “the original” is a moving target. The authenticity of a fictional world has a strong temporal aspect. As new works set in a familiar fictional world are published, they influence not just what comes after, but also the perception of earlier works. The construction of authenticity within a semiosphere is a process of defining and re-defining the state, properties, and contents of a fictional world. Although the perception of authenticity is always temporal and dynamic, there are some common dynamics. For example, within the oeuvre of a single writer, newer entries are usually interpreted as more authentic, as the author can correct factual and linguistic errors between editions or add descriptive information, and new texts can explain older ones. However, there are exceptions: few people would claim that Lucas’ re-edited director’s cuts of the original three *Star Wars* movies are more authentic than the original versions, due to changes not accepted as authentic by the viewership. That is, older versions are often deemed more authentic: the original *Star Wars* trilogy tends to be the milestone of authenticity for the fans compared to the newer prequel trilogy. Still, this rule is not without exceptions: few people would recognize the original gun-wielding *Batman*¹⁸ as *the* authentic character, and even fewer would view Adam West’s television character (1966–1968) as more accurate than more recent reimagings.

The question of generational gaps and divisions of readership within the temporal construction of authenticity cannot be ignored: authenticity is simply what *seems* authentic, and some reader groups within a semiosphere may acknowledge contradictory versions as more authentic. Nor can the transmedial angle be ignored: if a text is produced in various media along the span of decades, gathering various different readerships of various ages, there will be division in the understanding of the authenticity of the text. For example, Robert E. Howard’s *Conan the Barbarian*¹⁹ stories are one of the best known franchises in early pulp fantasy. Comprised of approximately twenty short stories, the Conan stories defined “barbarian sword and sorcery” fantasy. For many readers, these short stories present the core of authenticity of what is Conan.

Popular works constitute and take place in fictional worlds. These fictional worlds can be created for a single work, but in genre fiction these worlds continue to be developed and elaborated, and they can evolve and even change radically over time. Sequels,

¹⁸ *Batman* first appeared in *Detective Comics* in 1939.

¹⁹ Originally by Robert E. Howard in 1932–1936.

prequels, pre-planned trilogies, pastiches, parodies, endless series, adaptations, “authorized” continuations, DVD and Bluray extras and commentary tracks, deleted scenes, assorted notes by the author, unauthorized fan works, re-imaginings, new printing with new covers, bestiaries, encyclopedias, and technology manuals all contribute to the fictional world.

The original text is expanded and even revised by subsequent texts. In addition, there are a large number of *paratexts* that influence the perception of a work. The concept of paratext was originally put forward by Gérard Genette (1987: 1), who noted that a “text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as the author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations.” Moreover, Genette’s concept of paratext was rather narrow: it was directly related to the book packaging and its marketing materials. According to Lunenfeld (1999: 14), the transformation of the publishing industry has led to the bloating of the paratext to the point that “it is impossible to distinguish between it and the text.” Digital media are even more prone to proliferate paratexts. Furthermore, the story of the creation of a text is “fast becoming as important as that object itself” (Lunenfeld 1999: 15). The concept of paratext has thus been widened as its use has been expanded to refer to other texts that extend the text in ways that influence its presentation, such as reviews, annotations, and analyzes (see Consalvo 2007: 8–9).

As texts, paratexts are part of a semiosphere, but they also contain, construct, and may even explicate the norms, rules, and conventions of the semiosphere. As fictional worlds and settings are always contained in semiospheres, paratexts also contribute to them, although the relation can be complex. One example of the effects of paratexts comes from film adaptations of novels. Though not paratexts as such, films and television series tend to provide illustrations for book covers, directing the readers to adopt a specific view of a character or milieu.

Another starting point is in expanded *fictional worlds*. Ideas, theories, and practices for processing them as holistic entities exist (as discussed, in addition to Lotman, by e.g. Doležel, Eco, and Ryan; see below), and some have been demonstrated to work well in interpreting fiction. Likewise, “detaching” fictional worlds from their original media or setting and bringing them to another have been central in transmedial studies. For example, Doležel (1998: 8) attacks the mimetic reading of fiction and provide an alternative: fictional worlds are typically linked to “our” world (and other fictional worlds) through intertextual links – but primarily they exist as independent constructs created by the reader through semiotic interpretation. The factual non-existence of the fictional worlds is no reason to not study them as holistic entities, even if the point of reference must be adjusted (Doležel 1998: 145). Ryan (1991) approaches the subject from a slightly wider angle, implementing the model into transmedial use with the concept of *possible worlds*, thus blending bringing intertextuality and transmediality.

Hanna-Riikka Roine (2016: 33) takes Ryan’s concepts further, suggesting that in fiction, “speculative worldbuilding is a unique practice that enables different uses or aspects of imagination to come together,” noting that “speculative fiction, in particular,

invites its users to engage with the worlds imaginatively, but it also enables them to recognise the artificiality of these worlds, to reflect on the fact that they are real-world constructions made for a purpose.” That is, for her, the reader both immerses in the fictionality of the world, while simultaneously recognizing it as a cultural construct. Roine (2016: 34) portrays this division as *world-internal* and *world-external*, and draws on Polvinen’s (2012) critique of Ryan, noting that the reader necessarily interprets the fictional world simultaneously from both immersively within the fictional world, and externally as an artistic object.

Michael Saler, on the other hand, differentiates between *imaginary worlds* and *imagined worlds*. The latter have existed as long as humans have told stories, but the former emerged in late nineteenth century. After the disenchantment brought on by secularized and rational modernism, a thoroughly modern enchantment arose in literature by flaunting “[f]antasy realms presented in realist mode, cohesively structured, empirically detailed, and logically based, often accompanied by scholarly apparatus such as footnotes, glossaries, appendices, maps, and tables” (Saler 2012: 25).

The distinction between texts and paratexts is particularly blurred in popular fictional worlds that share the same irrealia. Tolkien’s Middle-Earth is the classic example, but everything from *The Matrix* (films, animations, comic books, games) to *Harry Potter* (books, films, diegetic bestiaries) works in a similar way. Daniel Mackay (2001: 29) has discussed such *imaginary-entertainment environments*:

Today, the paperback, computer game, comic book, roleplaying game, film and CD-ROM markets are all inundated by what I call *imaginary-entertainment environments*: fictional settings that change over time as if they were real places *and* that are published in a variety of mediums (e.g., novels, films, roleplaying games, etcetera), each of them in communication with the others as they contribute toward the growth, history and status of the setting. Because they appear in so many mediums, imaginary-entertainment environments are always collaborative.

Similarly, Saler (2012: 26–33) discusses new *public spheres of the imagination*, which emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Although preceded by reading groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, letters pages in fiction magazines, associations and conventions became a new kind of forum for in-depth discussions about fictional characters and worlds, a “synergy of multiple minds to bring the imaginary world to life and to perpetuate it as an evolving territory transcending any single reader’s involvement” (Saler 2012: 17–18). What these forums create are *virtual worlds*. This is a concept rather similar to a semiosphere related to a specific imaginary construct. That is, it incorporates the idea that an imaginary world is created in a discourse between authors and readers, allowing for readings originating and modified through discourse between readers, often without authorial input. These so-called fandom readings can differ vastly from the original texts – and produce new texts based on these readings (Hirsjärvi 2009: 114–116).

More importantly in this context, Matt Hills (2002) has introduced a concept similar to virtual worlds: *hyperdiegesis*. *Diegesis* is a term borrowed from narrative and film studies (e.g. Bordwell and Thompson 1986: 502), where it is used to denote the world of the film's story. It entails all that is true within the fiction, including everything that is presumed to have happened before the events of the film as well as places and actions not depicted on the screen. Hills explicates this in relation to cult texts such as *Star Trek* and *Twin Peaks*. For him, the perception of hyperdiegesis is a "vast and detailed narrative space, only a fraction of which is ever directly seen or encountered within the text, but which nevertheless appears to operate according to principles of internal logic and extension" (Hills 2002: 137).

As with semiosphere, the concept of hyperdiegesis (and imaginary entertainment environment) shifts focus from the *text*, which points to an (immutable) source, to the *diegetic*. As focus is shifted, the content is seen as primary in relation to the form of telling. The dynamics of handling the content are especially interesting. For example, a feature of most hyperdiegeses is that they always leave room for additions – thus using the idea of gaps (see 2.1.4) as a tool not only for reader-originated saturation but also for enhancing the expandability of the diegesis through future texts.

In this study, I propose that a hyperdiegesis could be considered a minor semiosphere within the larger semiospheres of genre and other cultural semiospheres. Unlike the semiospheres, which can also contain non-diegetic information, hyperdiegeses only contain diegetic information in a specific fictional setting. Within a hyperdiegesis – or any genre / subgenre specific semiosphere – irrealia originate and evolve through a semiospheric process within a state of *semiospheric containment* (see below) created by the restrictions placed on the development of texts and stories by the boundaries of the semiospheres that the irrealia belong to. I will use hyperdiegesis as a concept to explore the development of irrealia specifically within a single "shared" world that can comprise texts written in multiple media by multiple authors, such as the *Warhammer* setting, which includes different miniature game lines, book lines, roleplaying games, and video games. In some cases, such as *Harry Potter*, the *hyperdiegesis* can be based on texts written by a single author, but even in these cases, paratexts, film and game adaptations, and non-canonical texts (such as fan fiction) can affect the interpretation of specific irrealia within the hyperdiegesis.

2.1.5 Semiospheric Containment and Transmediality

Populist play with racial imagery and racist stereotypes was common in fiction in the nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries. After World War II, mainstream fiction started to shed much of its most obvious racial imagery. Racial imagery started to become better observed, and racialized – or racist – archetypes became better recognized (even though they still exist). Even so, while the use of racial archetypes decreased in mainstream fiction, in literary fantasy and science fiction the signs of racial stereotypes developed into signs and jargon of the genres, including explicit, heavy-handed racism.

In many cases, irrealia based on racial stereotypes within the author's main cultural semiosphere have been preserved in a static mode regardless of the evolution of its main cultural semiosphere. This process has taken place in irrealia, parts of irrealia, and hyperdiegeses. The reason for this process can be seen in how irrealia are created. In a fledgling genre with no readily defined contextual grammar (as with early pulp fantasy or science fiction) and no stable semiosphere, authors are prone to create the fantastic characters and concepts by referring to phenomena in the generic cultural semiosphere of their readers. Thus, they develop the features and metaphors of the genre through existing stereotypes and concepts in their main cultural semiospheres. As the genre matures, it often becomes more self-referential, creating a new, secondary semiosphere surrounding its texts.

My claim is that at the start of a genre, references are often created based on the real world, but when the secondary semiosphere constructs a body of texts, the intertextuality changes from the exterior of the nascent semiosphere to the interior. However, the semiosphere still contains and encases the original allusions borrowed from the source culture, sometimes clashing heavily with the changes in the main cultural semiosphere.

This process can be called *semiospheric containment*, the containment of aspects of irrealia with allusive and metaphoric elements that have had cultural anchors within the main cultural semiosphere, but whose original cultural anchors might have changed or become unviable in its original cultural semiosphere. Within the secondary cultural semiosphere of a fantastic genre (or even further within a world specific hyperdiegesis), these allusions and metaphoric links continue to live on as internally referential features of irrealia, whose evolution is delayed. The process can be seen in other cases as well, especially in the allusions originating in notions related to African natives, the black population of the United States, Jewish people, Russians (especially of the Soviet era), and the Chinese and the Japanese (especially through pulp fiction portraying World War II). In chapter 4, I will discuss two case studies consisting of four irrealia, one having roots in colonial discourse on African blacks, and the other to antisemitism, in order to explore the effects of semiospheric containment on these specific irrealia.

The process of semiospheric containment is not limited to irrealia but can affect entire hyperdiegeses with interlinked irrealia or realia. Nor does it need actual irrealia to function. For example, in the hyperdiegesis of *Tarzan*, the colonial stereotypes and realia are embedded and at least partially retained in contemporary adaptations, even though many of them might be deemed unacceptable (or at least be challenged if used) in fiction beyond the original hyperdiegesis (see 3.3).

Many of the irrealia with roots in racially or culturally motivated allusive content have become part of the semiospheres of modern fantasy and science fiction by being transformed into non-existing – fantastic – concepts that allow self-referential allusions within the genre. The process of cocooning these concepts within a layer of the fantastic allows them to retain their racial signifiers, even if they are unacceptable and criticized in mainstream arts.

Although often most likely unintended today, such racially motivated signs are deeply rooted in genre specific semiospheres, and even more deeply rooted in specific hyperdiegeses. The process can be seen as a kind of interaction between signifiers and signifieds on the broader scale I have suggested above. When an irrealis is first created, the signified – the intended or received meaning – of the irrealis can be said to contain cultural concepts as understood by the author and readers at the time. The author communicates this through a set of signifiers, whether textual, paratextual, visual, or auditory. As more texts use similar signifiers, the irrealis (consisting of both signifiers and the signified) becomes more rooted in the genre specific semiosphere.

Then, as the main cultural semiosphere changes, the *reading* of the signified can change for the new readership in the main cultural semiosphere while staying the same in the secondary genre specific semiosphere. Similarly, new authors can change the signifiers in an irrealis, which may lead to the coexistence of incompatible hyperdiegesis specific signifiers pointing to a signified mainly identical with the original one, or to a signified changing with the new signifiers. In 4.1, I discuss orcs, an example of an irrealis that has (in some interpretations) slowly evolved due to how its signifiers have been rewritten over time. In 4.2, I examine the counter-example of dwarves, gnomes, and goblins as three partly interlinked irrealia that have drawn on a pool of racially motivated signifiers during their evolution.

As we shall see in chapters 3 and 4, the genres of the fantastic are highly transmedial in nature. While some franchises are designed as inherently transmedial, most of the franchises have undergone transmedial evolution. Adaptations and re-imaginings of texts from one media to another have been a vital part of the evolution of the semiospheres of the fantastic, and in many cases the adaptations (or, in turn, their adaptations) have become the de facto interpretation of a franchise.

It should be noted that many scholars today explicitly make a distinction between adaptations and transmediality,²⁰ or even view adaptations as a redundant form: “Retelling a story in a different media type is adaptation, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is transmediation” (Long 2007: 22) or “distinction must be made between transmedia extensions and adaptations” (Smith 2009: 24). As noted by Christy Dena (2009: 148), “The premise of this adaptations-are-redundant argument is that any repeating of a story adds no value to the experience or meaning-making process.” Dena (2009: 151–154) challenges this viewpoint, noting that adaptation includes creative choices, additions, and subtractions to the material that are unique to the new media, thus creating readings that did not exist in the previous text. What is more, as Dena (2009: 158) points out, adaptations can be the entry point to a hyperdiegesis by creating various different entry-level readings for a text:

Rather than seeing adaptation as a linear, assembly-line process,
where there is a main composition that is then adapted into other

²⁰ See Jenkins 2006, Long 2007, and Smith 2009 for further discussion.

media, it is the essence of a single story, game or event that is expressed and accessed through different media, through different artforms. This resonates with the spirit of transmedia, in which each medium is seen as an equally viable expression of a fictional world.

I side with Dena in this argument. The complexity of the issue is brought forth by the time lapses between original texts and their adaptations, the problematic nature of “the original text” as a concept, and the methods and mechanisms through which different media can fill different gaps within a hyperdiegesis. This means that an adaptation can never be completely redundant.

While, for example, the textual form of a novel or a short story might be better suited for an examination of the inner monologues and thoughts of a character than a film (at least in a typical case), an audiovisual representation might be better in creating an accepted common visualization of a character or setting in a semiosphere than a textual representation. Similarly, a video game adaptation of a film might include additional settings and locales, or its dialogue tree might illustrate the choices made by a character more comprehensively than a film. Semiotically speaking, the signifiers used in each medium to denote specific signifieds differ from each other in concrete and fundamental ways. The signifiers of each medium are not equivalent with each other – instead, they may partially interlace or overlap, with each signifier having media specific signifiers when producing the signified.

The importance of adaptations is enhanced through the prevalence of adaptation specific visualizations or textual information becoming paratexts of the original text. For example, many novels that are adapted to films have been reprinted with film specific covers, thus creating new readings of the visualizations of the original texts. Similarly, many texts are created as “adaptation-ready”: the authors “design their original creation to facilitate its likelihood of being adapted across media from the beginning” (Dena 2009: 156). This can be viewed not only as being due to authorial intent but as a common norm in any popular franchise: popular games are adapted from films, novelizations of original major films (and games) have existed for decades, comics are used as marketing devices for films and games, and any novel popular enough will very likely be filmed or televised.

2.1.6 Analyzing Irrealia

As irrealia tend to contain multiple interlinked aspects, since some of them are connected to their original main cultural semiospheres via semiospheric containment, the question arises how to study the components of specific irrealia and how to break down the signifieds of irrealia based on the textual signifiers, genre conventions, and semiospheric changes through time.

The problem is exacerbated by the incompatibility of semiosphere specific cultural allusions, whose translation between cultures – or even temporally within a culture – can obscure the original allusions with a cover of new meanings found in the target culture.

Not only can allusions be specific to their main cultural semiosphere, they can vary between genre specific semiospheres. For example, in a literary text, a *gloomy forest* can simultaneously carry a denotative meaning (as a forest in which high trees shut out the light), a metaphoric meaning dependent on the text (e.g. loneliness, uncertainty), a role within the text (as an opponent for the protagonists who get lost in it), as well as meanings based on the genre (a dangerous place in a horror story or fairy tale meant to scare children so that they will not go alone into the woods). Another example is an *orc*, which can have various roles in a text based on the hyperdiegesis. For readers of Tolkien, an orc's role is that of an evil antagonist, while for readers of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series, the orc may be an innocent victim of racism, and for players of games such as *The World of Warcraft* or *The Elder Scrolls*, the orc could be either an active protagonist, an active antagonist, a helper, or just another character the protagonist can communicate with.

In order to analyze all the meanings contained by an irrealis, a method is needed to define the irrealia and its varying elements of meaning. The irrealis needs to be divided – for each text – into at least its denotative and connotative elements as well as the roles it has in the text and the meaning provided by the fictional or referred culture or cultural subset (or the fictional culture *as reflected* through the reader's culture, especially in translations).

In this study, the model I employ is based on Eero Tarasti's existential theory of the subject.²¹ According to Tarasti (2004: 100–101), each subject can contain four simultaneous states that define the *being* of the subject: *being-in-myself*, *being-for-myself*, *being-for-itself* and *being-in-itself*. From the viewpoint of the analysis and translation of irrealia, this existential model can be used to analyze irrealia within a text or a genre specific semiosphere (Loponen 2009: 170–173). What this means in practice is that both texts (regardless of their media) and semiospheres will be viewed as systems in which irrealia can function through their interaction within the text and between texts. Furthermore, meanings can be supplied to the text from the culture outside the texts through allusions, cultural metaphors, and other intertextual or cultural references. This can be done by breaking down an irrealis into individual element groups and analyzing them separately. For example, the irrealis *orc* consists of the reader's understanding of what the concept is (the signified) and of the signifiers used in the text to link to the concept. When the irrealis *orc* is dissected for analysis, what actually happens is that the signifiers that link to the signified of *orc* are catalogued and categorized by their function. Some of the signifiers are textual and others are gaps saturated by readers through their prior knowledge of the semiosphere (see 2.1.4). Some of the signifiers are explicit descriptive markers in the text, while others are cultural allusions that point to the main cultural semiosphere or a genre specific semiosphere. It should be noted that while signifiers are not – nor can they be – the signified as they only evoke the signified in the reader's mind, changes in them between time periods and languages can help us understand the contents of the signifieds to which they are linked.

²¹ This model was first used for the analysis of textual meaning of irrealia in Loponen 2009.

The schema I propose for analyzing irrealia and translations of irrealia can be visualized in a basic semiotic four-square similar to Tarasti's states, divided into four basic elements (Loponen 2009: 171). The elements produced through the subdivision of irrealia into its basic states (see Figure 1) can be described as:

Building on my earlier work (Loponen 2006: 39–40; 2009: 171–172), I use these four states to divide irrealia into four states:

Denotation <i>Actual denotative meaning of the text element</i>	Connotation <i>Metaphoric and connotative values of the text element</i>
Role in Text <i>Meaning in the text</i>	Role in Norms <i>Meaning bestowed through genre and culture</i>

Figure 1 – The existential states of irrealia
(Loponen 2009: 171)

Denotation – The denotative value of the concept without connotative or allusive influences. The denotation of *wolf*, for example, describes a woodland predator. The denotation of a fictional irrealis such as *orc* is based on the hyperdiegesis and the reader's understanding of the genre specific semiosphere and may change accordingly: in Tolkienesque fantasy, the denotation is 'dark-skinned slaves of evil,' while in *Warhammer 40K*, it is 'green-skinned hooligan warriors.'

Connotation – The connotative or metaphoric values of the concept. The connotations of *wolf* may, in our main cultural semiospheres and the semiospheres of popular culture, entail cruelty, pack-mindedness, predatory impulses, or cunning. The connotations of a fictional irrealis such as *orc* differ depending on the hyperdiegesis and the genre specific semiosphere: in Tolkienesque fantasy, the connotations are those of cruelty and willingness to do evil, while in Pratchett's texts they are those of victims of racism.

Role in norms – Values the concept derives from its inherent semiospheres, including genre, cultural norms, or allusions that evoke meanings exterior to the text. For example, a *wolf* may be used in a text to describe dangers of a forest or as an allusion to the tale *Little Red Riding Hood* – or, perhaps, in the genre of fantasy, as the friends of (and at times ridden by) orcs. The role of *orcs* in norms is based on their use in the semiospheres

of fantasy: in Tolkienesque fantasy, for example, *orc* has been used to allude to nonhuman evil.

Role in text – The norms, ideas, and values of the concept as they are realized in its interaction in a text. The role the text element takes within the boundaries of the text or its story. For the purposes of this study, I will use the Greimasian actant model for specifying the text element’s roles inside the text. Greimas (1983: 196–207) divides actants into six actant classes: *subject*,²² *object*; *opponent*, *helper*; *sender* and *receiver*. The actant classes function as the main dramatic roles within a narrative.

In this scheme, the *subject* is the protagonist or main character of a text. The *object* is the aim of the subject’s desires. The *sender* initiates the subject’s journey, and the *receiver* is the beneficiary of the journey, or the subject’s or object’s final destination in the narrative. Those who hinder the subject are *opponents*, while those who assist her are *helpers*. A single operator can have multiple actantial roles within a text. For example, a witch living in a solitary hut might provide solace for the protagonist and give her or him counsel before transforming into a threat, thereby acting both as a helper and as an opponent in the text.

For the purposes of this study, I will use the actantial classes mainly as referential information so as to display the changes within specific irrealia. The role of an irrealis – or realia – in text can often be linked to its role in norms, whether based on it (a *wolf* as an opponent) or in dialogue with it (a *killer whale* as gentle and befriending a boy). In a Tolkienesque setting, an *orc* would most likely be seen as an opponent, the typical role reserved for textual objects, while in a setting such as *The World of Warcraft*, an orc fits any actantial role based on its narrative and functional role in the game.

The base scheme of the analysis model can be displayed as:

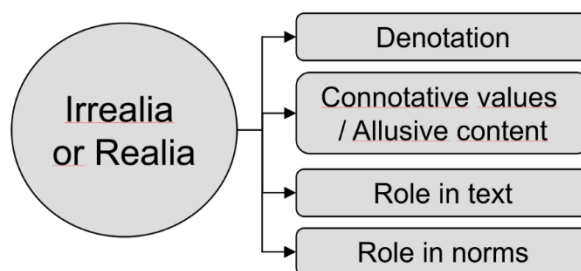


Figure 2 – The constructing blocks of (ir)realia

With the examples of realia and irrealia used above, *wolf* and Tolkienesque *orc* can be broken down to several elements:

²² Greimas’ ‘subject’ should not be confused with Tarasti’s ‘subject.’ Tarasti’s ‘subject’ refers to any independent operator, while the Greimasian ‘subject’ can be broadly defined as the protagonist of a fictional text.

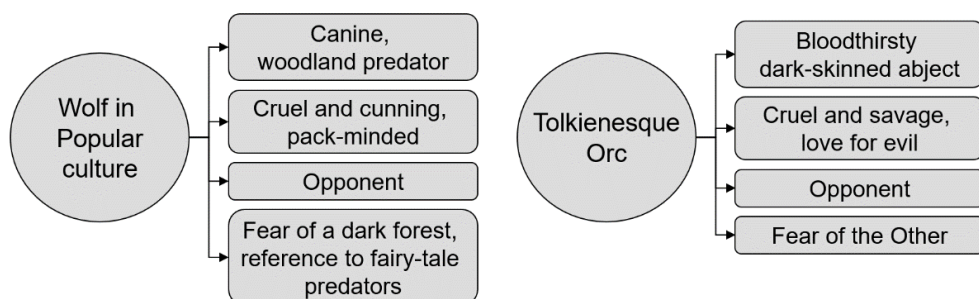


Figure 3 – Wolves and orcs

It should be noted that these examples are very simplified and contain only some attributes in each field to serve as examples. In other words, in practice, all realia and irrealia contains many more values in each separate element. I will discuss the scheme and prioritisation in the next section and return to the breakdown of the orc irrealis in 4.1.

2.2 Translating Fantastic Semiospheres

When doing any kind of translation, translators tend to fall back on various translation patterns reflecting their competence and the aims of the translation. When translating a children's book, for example, translators tend to favor a different set of tools and patterns than when translating a crime novel. Such choices of patterns in translations have commonly been labeled *translation strategies* in translation studies. I discuss these strategies in 2.2.1.

When translating fantastic fiction, the translator is faced with additional translation questions in comparison to translating fiction situated in the real world or its equivalents. The translator has two major additional translation problems: (1) how to translate irrealia, and (2) how to cope with irrealia that have previously been rendered into the target language – and for which the earlier renditions may no longer be fully usable (resulting from, for example, a different perception of the target audience).²³

While translators employ various tools in all translation, in the case of fantastic fiction they need an additional toolset to handle the additional layer of fantastic concepts. The concepts may already have been translated in various ways, and their original translation and evolution in the target language may have resulted in connotations that differ from the original source language version. The tools for handling fantastic

²³ One example of this is the translation of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* into Finnish first by Risto Pitkänen as *Lohikäärmevuori* (1973) and later by Kersti Juva as *Hobitti* (1985). Pitkänen's translation was produced as an independent text aimed for children, while Juva's translation drew on her translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, thus placing *Hobitti* into the same hyperdiegesis.

translations are discussed in 2.2.2–2.2.3 along with a case study. The use of the tools related to the translation of racialized descriptions is discussed in chapter 5.

2.2.1 On Translation Strategies

The concept of translation strategies has been defined and redefined as a concept throughout the history of modern translation studies. Scholars such as Wolfram Wilss (1983), Candace Séguinot (1989), Riitta Jääskeläinen (1993, 2009), Patrick Zabalbeascoa (2000), Andrew Chesterman (1997, 2005), and others have defined and redefined what translation strategy means. The concept has gone through many changes since its conception, and as noted by Chesterman (1997: 87), “the result has been considerable terminological confusion.” As Jääskeläinen (2009: 376) writes, “‘Translation Strategy’ is admittedly one of the most elusive concepts in translation studies.”

For a competent translator, the process of translation can be considered a series of strategic choices, some automated, others resulting from encountering a specific problem. According to Chesterman (1997: 88, 89), a strategy in itself is for translators “a kind of process [...] to arrive at the best version they can think of, what they regard as the optimal translation,” and “strategies, in the sense I shall use the term, are thus forms of explicitly textual manipulation. They are directly observable from the translation product itself, in comparison with the source text.” At a later update, so as to quell terminological confusion, Chesterman (2005: 19) defines strategy as usually denoting “a way of dealing with a specific communication problem,” noting that “some scholars prefer to keep ‘strategies’ for cases where the translator has a problem to solve.” This reflects his earlier stand, but broadens the concept and immerses it with different types of strategies related to problem-solving, such as analytical, search, and reformulation strategies.

Lörscher, on the other hand, divides translation into strategic and non-strategic processes. For him, strategic translation includes the parts of the translation process that do not conform with “automatized” translation. This occurs when the translator needs to engage in cognitive processing when creating the target text: “A translation strategy is a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another” (Lörscher 1991: 76).

This view of strategic versus non-strategic translation has in fact been challenged. As noted by Leppihalme (1997: 25), strategies can be largely automatized by experienced translators, and the translator does not even need to be conscious of using strategies. That is, at least some “non-strategic” translation is not non-strategic, but involves automatized strategies that make up the routine of an experienced translator’s translation processes. However, strategic decisions can be isolated choices based on the needs of a text, or integral conscious or intuitive parts of the translation process:

A particular strategy, then, can be chosen either consciously, with the translator carrying out a series of operations judging various linguistic, contextual and cultural factors, or intuitively [...]. It may

represent a blueprint developed by an experienced translator [...] or result from an inexperienced translator's lack of alternatives. (Leppihalme 1997: 25)

Building on Jääskeläinen (1993) and Séguinot (1989), Chesterman (1997: 90) divides strategies into two kinds: *global strategies* that affect the translation on a wider textual or stylistic level, and *local strategies* that are used to translate specific structures or textual points. Jääskeläinen (2009: 384) takes the division further by providing a four-square map of translation strategies by dividing translation strategies into *process* and *product strategies* in addition to global and local strategies.²⁴ In Jääskeläinen's (2009: 384) map, process-oriented global strategies describe "task-independent preferred modes of action," such as consistency or work-flow practices,²⁵ while process-oriented local strategies match Lörscher's (1991) "individual problem-solving strategies." Product-oriented global strategies describe text-related "task-dependent general approaches," such as domesticating versus foreignizing or the overall register or style of the translation, "which guide subsequent local strategies" (Jääskeläinen 2009: 384). Such product-oriented local strategies match for example Leppihalme's (2001) and Chesterman's (1997) strategies of direct transfer, paraphrasing, omission, cultural adaptation, among others. Even though all of these strategies can be useful in textual analysis, many have definition-related complexities for the studying of culture specific concepts such as racial stereotyping given fantastic guises in genres of the fantastic.

As I mainly discuss *translation products*, not the *translation process* in this study, my focus in the chapter dealing with translation of irrealia (chapter 5) is on product-oriented (or text-oriented) global and local strategies. Let me now outline a model for decoding the translation of fantastic irrealia into various building blocks.

2.2.2 Translation of Fantastic Semiospheres

As noted above, the semiospheric evolution and the processes that guide the evolution of irrealia within a semiosphere of the fantastic are complex and multifaceted, with the semiospheres affecting each other, and irrealia being affected both by their main cultural semiosphere and the semiosphere(s) of the fantastic to which they belong.

As discussed earlier and shown in Figure 4 below, even without the temporal element, the construction of a single irrealis depends on a complex dynamic between the irrealis, genre specific semiosphere(s), and concepts in the main cultural semiosphere.

²⁴ Jääskeläinen's global and local strategies are based on Hönig's (1991) macro and micro strategies.

²⁵ This includes translating "without interruption as long as possible" (Jääskeläinen 2009: 384).

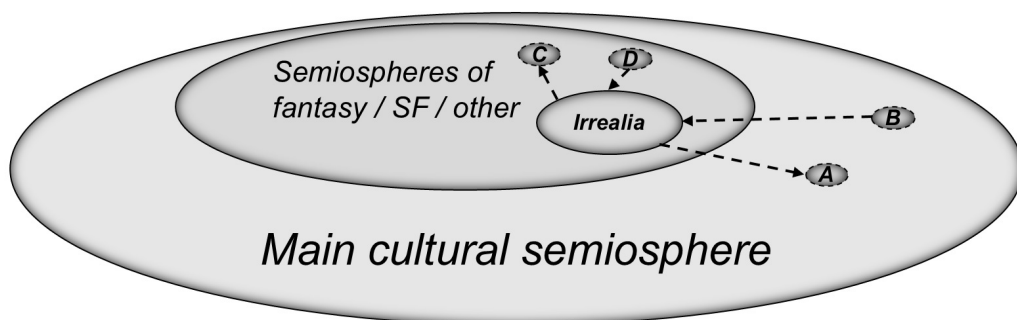


Figure 4 – Construction of an irrealis

In Figure 4, A and B denote signifiers inside the primary cultural semiosphere but outside the genre specific semiosphere, while C and D reflect signifiers inside the genre specific semiosphere. Irrealia can draw signifiers from both inside the genre specific semiosphere and the primary cultural semiosphere (B and D). Similarly, irrealia can conceptually affect both the genre specific semiosphere and the main cultural semiosphere (A and C).

When the temporal element (time progressing since the creation of the irrealis) is added to the process and the mechanics are contemplated, the number of variables that change in their writing or reading grows significantly, as displayed in Figure 5.

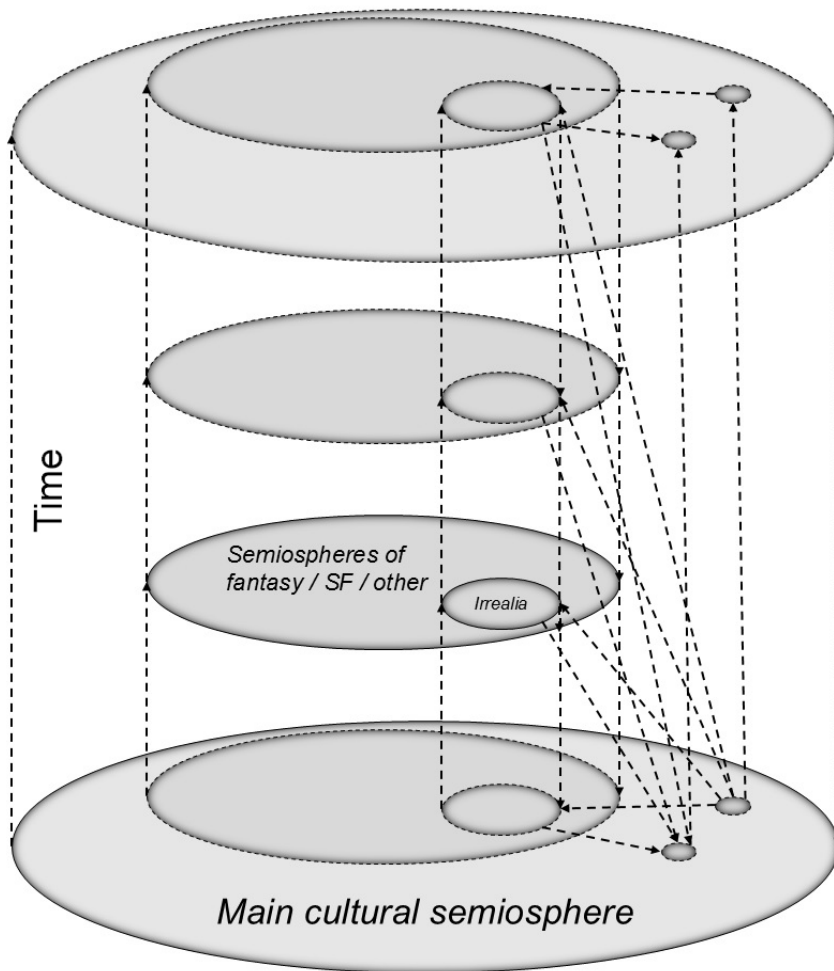


Figure 5 – Evolution of an irrealis over time.

In Figure 5, the vertical axis is time, with the topmost state being the current situation and the bottom state being the original state. The history affects the reading of the irrealis in the current state.

As can be seen, even in this simplified figurative presentation, the development of an irrealis depends on multiple factors, many of them outside the semiospheres of the fantastic. When considering the translation of the irrealis along with the temporality of the semiospheres both in the source and target cultures, the holistic view becomes even more complex, as displayed in Figure 6:

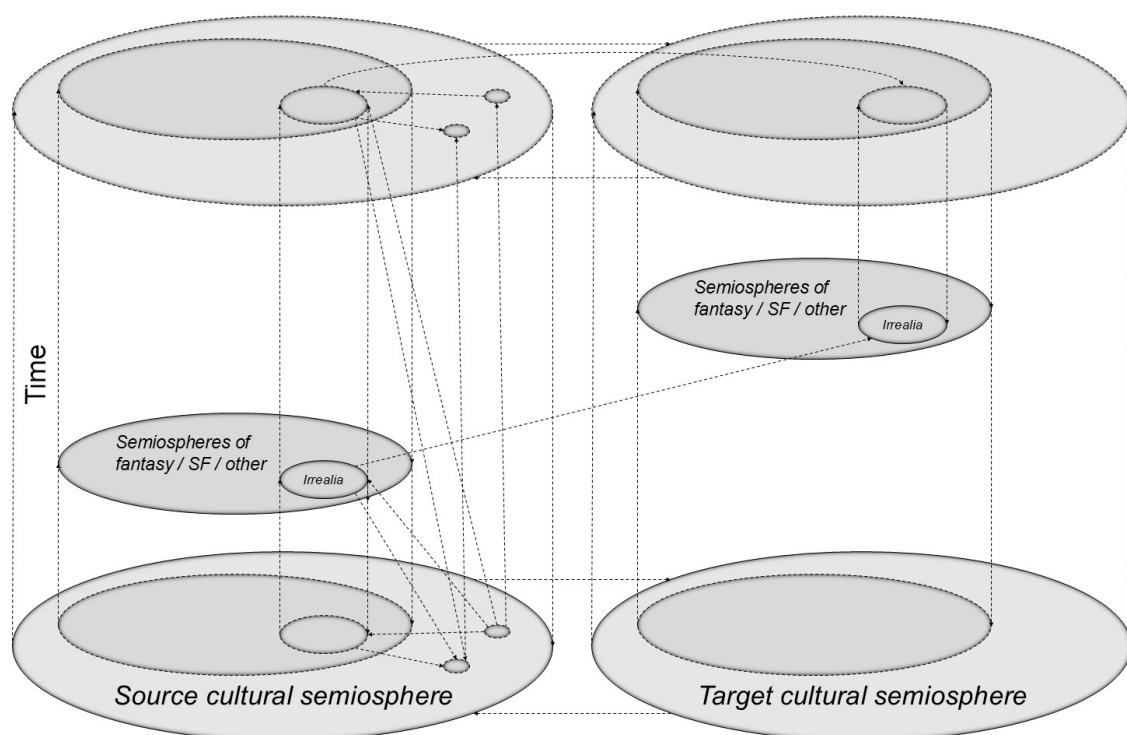


Figure 6 – Translating an evolving irrealis.

The complexity of the translation process is increased by the partial overlapping of the semiospheres of the fantastic, which are presented as separate in Figure 6. In the figure, the states on the left describe the source language cultural semiosphere, and the states on the right describe the target language cultural semiosphere.

Fantastic fiction written in English is often read in its original language even in non-native English speaking cultures, which means that the semiospheres of the fantastic are not absolutely related to the main cultural semiospheres of the readers. In some main cultural semiospheres, such as countries with English as a second or third language, the mechanics of translation (or the lack of it) work toward secondary cultural semiospheres that have at least partially merged with English speaking secondary cultural semiospheres. This is especially true of games, which are rarely translated, and films, in which audiovisual information is provided independent of linguistic components.

However, even though the genre specific semiospheres can be considered partially merged between cultures, the allusive content²⁶ of irrealia inherent in a source culture is not automatically transferred between cultures. For a reader well versed in the source language and the secondary cultural semiosphere (e.g. fantasy or SF) but non-proficient in the complexities of the primary source cultural semiosphere of the time of the publication of the original text, any allusive content with temporal links to the source cultural semiosphere is likely to be lost. This can affect both native readers and second language readers. As noted by Leppihalme (1997: 14) as regards translation issues: “Even when the functions of ST [source text] and TT [target text] are nearly the same, for instance in the case of crime fiction [...] TT readers differ from ST readers in that they live in another language culture.” When viewed through the lens of semiospheres and their temporal evolution, ST readers living in the original time of a text’s publication within a semiosphere differ from ST readers living at a later point in the cultural semiosphere, with both the main and secondary cultural semiospheres evolving and affecting the cultural anchors of the allusive content within the text.²⁷

The temporal evolution and the subsequent play with allusive content that points both to the primary cultural semiosphere and the secondary semiosphere may affect the translation of fantastic texts more than of non-fantastic texts. Allusive links within a fantastic text that point to the original temporal state of the main cultural semiosphere of their creation may make no sense within either the primary or secondary cultural semiosphere to which they are translated. How can you, for example, recognize and translate source text colonialist signifiers of evil to target text main and secondary semiospheres, if the target semiospheres have no intra-semiospheric colonialist discourse? An omission of such signifiers might be seen as a valid strategy for the translator.

Similarly, keeping the signifiers as “dead” signifiers that are not linked to their allusive roots in the target primary cultural semiosphere can be seen as an option, leading to a similar process as semiospheric containment discussed above. If “dead” allusive signifiers are maintained,²⁸ their allusive anchor points can switch to the secondary cultural semiosphere, pointing to the irrealia themselves instead of their primary cultural roots. Finally, the signifiers can be “re-anchored” to new roots in the target primary cultural semiosphere. Next, I discuss these potential tools and strategic choices translators can utilize for the translation of irrealia.

²⁶ Meanings specific to connotations, culture, and norm.

²⁷ As noted by Leppihalme (1997: 15), in addition to its language component, a message “has many non-linguistic components as well, such as being linked to time and place and requiring a certain degree of extralinguistic knowledge” and “comprehension thus requires a close intra- and interlinguistic analysis as a prerequisite.”

²⁸ See Leppihalme 1997 for further discussion on dead or dying allusions in translation.

2.2.3 Translation Tools in Theory and Practice

Since translation of fiction is based on the translator's individual interpretation of the source text and since different languages and cultures assign different connotations to signs presented in the source text, translation necessarily changes the text. As Gorlée (2004: 103) puts it, translation is always "in fact a complex process of diachronic and/or diaspatial reimagining, rethinking, remodelling, and recontextualization." Similarly, as noted by Leppihalme (1997: 20), translators "need to be aware of TT readers' needs and to take into account the expectations and background knowledge of potential TT readers in order to make decisions on potential translation strategies." In all cases, the translator has to adapt the source text to the target culture, to carry its meanings into new culture specific contexts that will inevitably change some of the meanings. Even the simplest literary text contains numerous culture specific connotations and intertextual reference networks (Salo-oja 2004: 18–21), and the understanding of the text can vary widely depending on the cultural background of the reader.

To complicate matters even further, many meanings in a text are not only culture specific, but are specific to a certain cultural subset. As Peter D. Fawcett notes (1997: 6), the superstructure of connotation attached to even a single word or concept tends to vary not only between languages, but within a specific language. Thus, translators need not be competent only in a specific culture, but in different connotative views inside that culture. In other words, they need to understand the subcultures, that is, the cultural semiospheres in which the text is created. Even when the translator understands a meaning contained in the text, its translation will present culture dependent problems. As Lotman (1990a: 90) points out, a certain age group in a certain culture may interpret a specific type of a scar as a smallpox vaccination mark, while for another age group within the same culture it may only be a scar, and yet other people may interpret it as a caste mark.

For example, if Alexandre Dumas' *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* (1844) is translated for an adult audience, retaining the atmosphere of nineteenth century France through period specific allusions and metaphors is much more important than when adapting the book as a target language young adult edition. For the latter, a functionalist translator could potentially reconstruct some of the French atmosphere with just a few French idioms and untranslated words or phrases – such as words like *monsieur* or greetings such as *bonjour*. To complicate things further, there is Joe Abercrombie's *Best Served Cold* (2009), a gritty fantasy rendition and partially a satirization of Dumas' novel (and revenge fantasy novels in general). The atmosphere in Abercrombie's novel is created through allusions to both *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* and to fantasy, thus complicating the translation process with an additional allusive layer.

The tools presented in the previous section can be used to analyze translations, so as to distinguish the aspects of the original irrealia prioritized by the translator.²⁹ In an

²⁹ The model was designed for analyzing fictional texts (and translations) with metaphoric language (Loponen 2006), but was later modified for use with fantastic concepts (Loponen 2009).

ideal translation, all four simultaneous states of a concept – whether realia or irrealia – match in both the source and the target languages. This situation could be illustrated as in Figure 7.

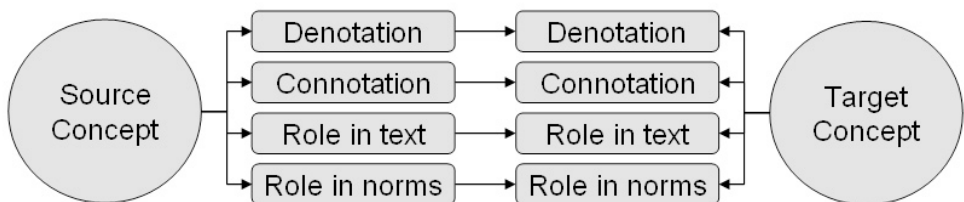


Figure 7 – Matched meanings

However, in many cases, finding a concept with matching qualities on all four levels of meaning in the target cultural semiospheres is not possible. If, for example, the target concept contains only some of the states of meaning contained in the source concept, the concept’s role in norms differs in the source and target cultural semiospheres. Also, if some meanings such as allusive content are changed in the translation, the translator needs to evaluate the relevance of each level of meaning contained in the concept.

A situation in which the connotative values and role in norms for a concept differ in the source and target semiospheres could be illustrated as in Figure 8.

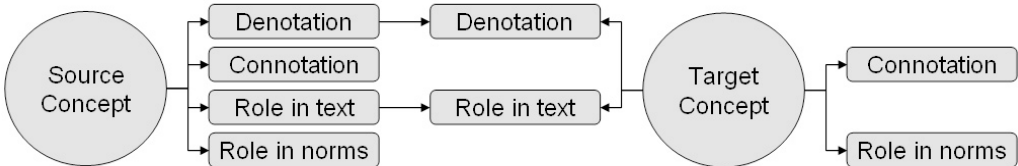


Figure 8 – Non-matched meanings

If the relevant meanings of the original concept are impossible to retain in translation, the translator could, as one solution, replace the concept with another that contains related meanings.

One example of separating irrealia into its states and analyzing the translation through them can be found in Johanna Vainikainen’s translation (*Kiduttajan varjo*, 2012) of Gene Wolfe’s *The Shadow of the Torturer* (1980). One of the original irrealia in Wolfe’s hyperdiegesis is *fuligin*, a color “blacker than black” (1980: 42). As a word, *fuligin* can be considered an archaic allusion used by Wolfe to create a specific style and atmosphere for the text, forcing the reader to check the terminology through dictionaries. *Fuligin* is a reference to the word *fuliginous*, meaning ‘Covered or blackened with soot. Chiefly in

humorously bombastic use.’³⁰ The term is derived from Latin, and was used chiefly before the latter half of the nineteenth century, which heightens its archaic and opaque character even for modern native English speakers. The text uses archaic terminology to play with reader misdirection: while the text is set in a fictional world that is at first described in terms of fantasy, the reader is slowly given clues with which to saturate the gaps, until the setting is evidently science fiction in the *Dying Earth* subgenre.

In the text, the protagonist receives the fuligin cloak when he graduates as a torturer, which gives the cloak – and its color – a role within the text. Within the hyperdiegesis, the cloak of “blacker than black” fuligin is meant to reflect the character’s role as a fully educated torturer and executioner. In the semiosphere of fantasy, a black garb tends to be a sign of evil, and the color of costumes for characters such as wizards has become a common trope not only in the fantastic but in genre fiction in general. Consider the white and black hats of the cowboys in Western fiction, Gandalf the Grey’s promotion to Gandalf the White in *The Lord of the Rings*, Raistlin Majere’s transformation from a red wizard to a black one in the *Dragonlance* series, and the black robes of the dark lords in textual and audiovisual characterizations from Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings* to Maleficent in Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty*³¹ and Lord Voldemort in *Harry Potter*. The wardrobe signifiers have pervaded the semiosphere, especially in the costumes of the minions of evil, who are routinely dark or dressed in black or other dark clothes, as in the Dementors and Death Eaters in *Harry Potter*, the Nazgûl in *The Lord of the Rings*, nearly all classic film vampires and witches, the Sith Lords in the *Star Wars* series and so on. Thus, the trope pervades the whole semiosphere of fantasy.

Categorized into four states, the signifiers of the fuligin irrealis can be interpreted as displayed in Figure 9.

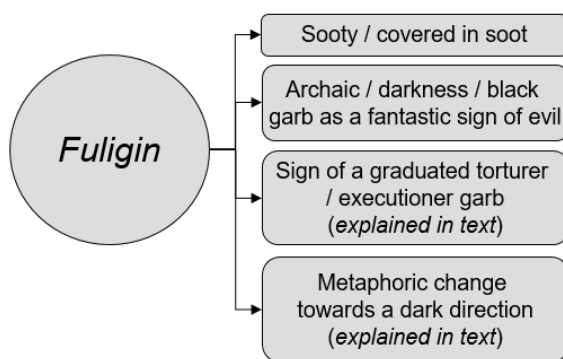


Figure 9 – The states of *fuligin*

³⁰ According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *fuliginous*.

³¹ And Disney’s *Maleficent* (2014), centered on the character.

Thus, at times the connotative values and role in norms can overlap. When translating Wolfe’s novel into Finnish, Vainikainen considered³² several potential translations related to different aspects of the term: *fuligiini*, *pikinen* / *pikevä*, *nokinen* / *nokeva*, *mähkäinen* / *mähkävä*, *synkeinen* / *synkkävä*, *öillinen* / *öitsivä*, *pimikko*. Since the meaning of the irrealis is explained in the source text right after the irrealis is named, the main translation issue lies in transferring the denotative and connotative meanings of the term. In fact, the role in text and the role in norms of the irrealis are discussed in the text, so their translation from the source text to the target text is not an issue in the translation of the irrealis’ concept.

Of these, *fuligiini* would have been a direct translation, according to Vainikainen; “cf. *anilin*” (2011, ‘*aniliini*’ in Finnish). As noted by Vainikainen (2011, my translation): “As the etymology of the original term is unknown to the average reader, this option would retain the feeling of strangeness.” However, in this way the term would have lost much of its connotations within and outside the text, as Figure 10 shows.

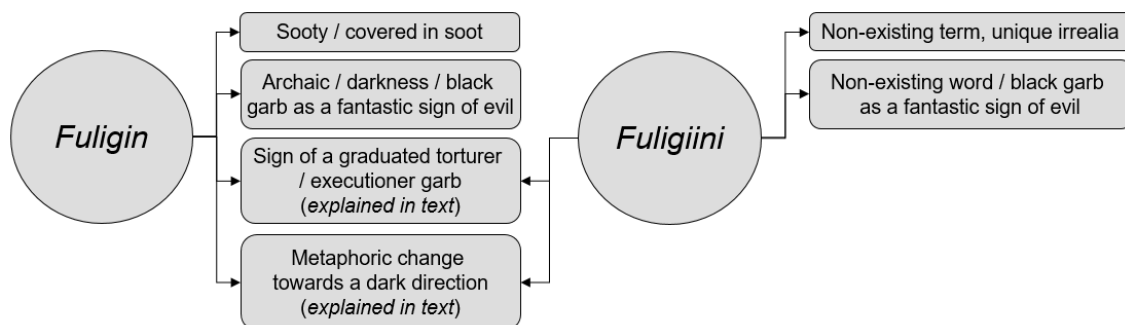


Figure 10 – *Fuligin* rendered as *fuligiini*

The next potential renderings, the neologisms *pikinen* and *pikevä*, derived as alternative adjectival formulations from *piki* ‘pitch’,³³ which also occurs in the adjective *pikimusta* ‘pitch black.’ While such potential renderings suggest black color, their connotations of stickiness and smell would create rather thwarted meanings for the term as illustrated in Figure 11:

³² According to personal correspondence during the translation process, documented in Vainikainen (2012).

³³ A sticky product that can be distilled from substances such as tar or wood.

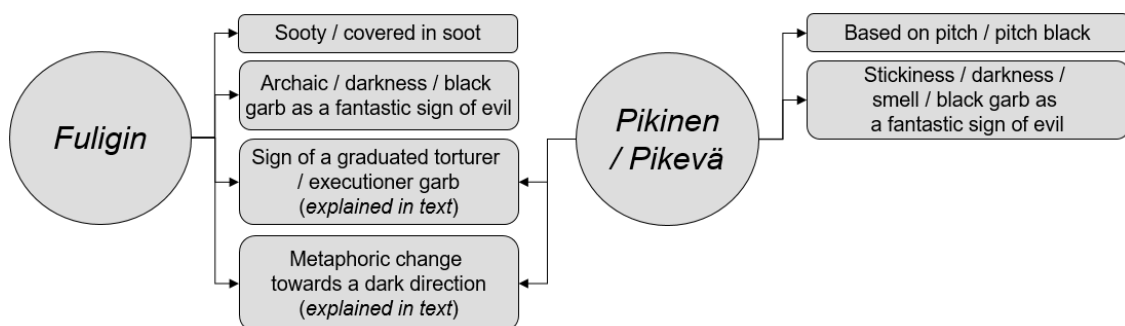


Figure 12 – *Fuligin* rendered as *pikinen* / *pikevä*

Similarly, *nokinen* ‘sooty’ or *nokeva* (a neologism derived from the word *noki* ‘soot’) would have been the equivalent of calling the irrealis *sooty* in original English, instead of *fuligin*:

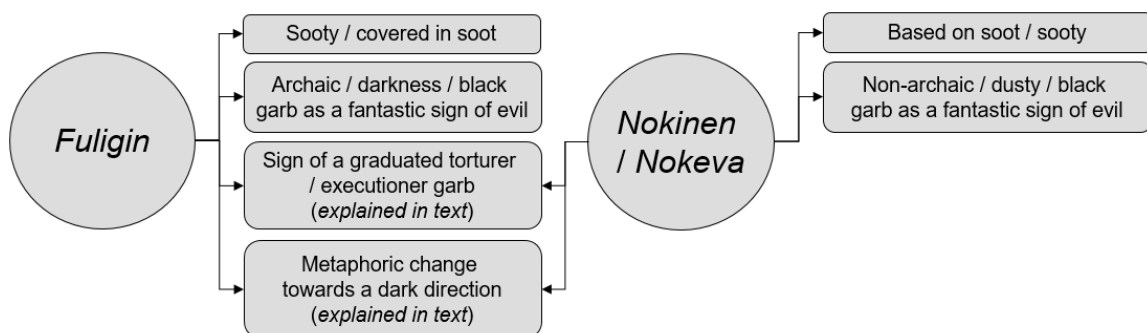


Figure 11 – *Fuligin* rendered as *nokinen* / *nokeva*

The other options noted above had similar problems. In the end, Vainikainen decided to use *sytevä* / *sytinen*,³⁴ a derivative of *sysi*, a term originally meaning ‘charcoal’, and now preserved mainly in compound words like *sysimusta* (roughly ‘pitch black’). This translation carries with it the archaic nature and feel of the original term, complete with the original charcoal based link, as well as a kind of grandeur:

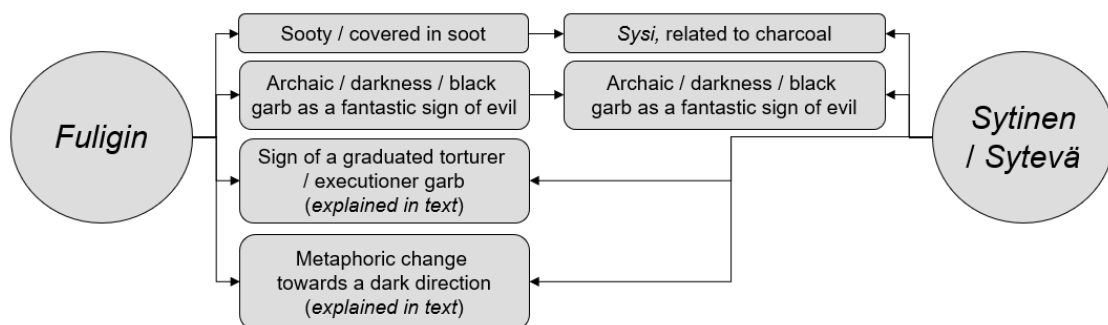


Figure 13 – *Fuligin* rendered as *sytinen* / *sytevä*

Naturally, this example provides only one possible view of how the translator can proceed. If the translator prioritizes elements other than the archaic style of the text and links to charcoal, other options would be available. *Fuligiini* would have made the irrealis into an original foreignizing one with no allusive links to soot, but with the reader able to find the original meaning through a dictionary or an Internet search. *Pikinen* / *pikevä* would have kept the term old-fashioned if not archaic, but it would have brought additional denotative and connotative values to the irrealis. *Nokinen* / *nokeva* would have kept the denotative links to charcoal, burnt wood, and ash, as well as the connotative links to industrialization through coal dust,³⁵ but it would have made the term lose its archaic nature.

In the example above, Vainikainen opted for the strategic choice of *domesticating* the irrealis, after considering other choices, such as *foreignizing* it by using the original term with Finnish spelling thus losing its allusive roots.

2.3 Synthesis: Fantastic Semiospheres and Their Translation

To sum up my theoretical framework, in any fiction, regardless of the medium, the reader starts to create the *fictional* or *possible world* of the text by textual clues by the author, and by using textual or paratextual hints to *saturate* the fictional world. In addition to such hints, readers fill the *gaps* of the world by *saturating* it with their presuppositions and

³⁴ Of these, while both are archaic, *sytevä* is a clear neologism, *sytinen* is more like a directly derived adjective.

³⁵ This may have provided a small hint toward the science fiction (or science fantasy) nature of the text rather than the fantastic setting expected by readers.

understanding of the *semiosphere* of the genre, that is, based on their own *fictional encyclopaedia*. In this way, readers use the textual hints to place the text within the correct genre and culture specific semiosphere. The semiosphere contains the “grammar” (cf. *langue*) and texts (cf. *parole*) of the genre. More precisely, readers fill the gaps through *the principle of minimal departure*. This means that they employ their understanding of the semiosphere and fill gaps with the minimal number of changes needed to deviate from their understanding of how the fictional world works as based on their understanding of the genre and the world. In genre fiction and especially fantastic fiction (including but not limited to fantasy, science fiction, supernatural horror, and their subgenres), readers are offered textual hints in the form of *irrealia*, fantastic concepts and signs, through which they incorporate the text into a particular genre (and subgenre) specific semiosphere.

While the genre or subgenre specific semiosphere can guide readers to fill the gaps in the creation of the fictional world, a *hyperdiegetical* reading can speed up the process. Hyperdiegesis denotes the diegetic levels of a denotatively shared fictional world and allows readers to fill the gaps directly through information from different texts in the hyperdiegetically shared world. The semiosphere of the world is created through hyperdiegetic connections, and it is hyperdiegetic relations and shared readings – not individual reader interpretations – that define how the authenticity of the hyperdiegesis is understood in its own semiosphere and the macro-semiosphere of its genre. Even within a subgenre specific semiosphere, the readers’ interpretation of the genre – and the genre conventions used in the text – affect which gaps can be filled even tentatively by a particular hyperdiegesis. Irrealia are shared both within the hyperdiegesis of a specific setting and within the genre specific semiosphere to which the hyperdiegesis belongs. The evolution of specific irrealia can take place in multiple incompatible hyperdiegeses, with each hyperdiegesis in relation to others as well as their genre specific semiosphere and their main cultural semiosphere(s). When irrealia are created, they often incorporate allusive characteristics from the main cultural semiosphere in which they were created.

While the main cultural semiospheres can evolve in ways that may not allow for specific characteristics to be portrayed with similar allusive content in mainstream literature, the fantastic irrealia created in the earlier main cultural semiosphere can retain such characteristics. This process of retaining cultural allusions no longer considered acceptable or valid in the main cultural semiosphere is called *semiospheric containment*. Semiospheric containment does not affect only irrealia, but entire hyperdiegeses can be seen to be affected by the process.

In order to analyze facets of irrealia and find elements affected either by the evolution of the irrealia or semiospheric containment, irrealia can be broken down into their basic elements. This model can be used both for original texts and for their translations, enabling both the analysis of the evolution of irrealia and comparison of the changes between original versions of irrealia and their translations. The translation analysis can be done by examining the translator’s *translation strategies*.

In the next chapter, I discuss the origin and development of the genres of the fantastic by employing the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter.

3 THE EVOLUTION OF FANTASTIC SEMIOSPHERES

In this chapter, I discuss the evolution of some of the semiospheres of the fantastic and present a brief history of some genres of the fantastic, including fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural horror. My aim is to display the inter- and intra-semiospheric construction of the genres to enable the exploration of the development and translation of irrealia within the secondary semiospheres of the fantastic. To illustrate the development, I examine the evolution of the work of three “pulp” authors, E.R. Burroughs, Robert E. Howard, and H.P. Lovecraft. These authors provide a view of early twentieth century racism in pulp fantasy fiction and the role of racialized stereotypes (both period and intentional) in the development of the genres. As the texts of the fantastic have transcended media barriers through adaptations, reworkings, and new texts written in different media, and since irrealia are developed across the media, I first provide a short introduction to the development of the genres in various media within the semiospheres of the fantastic.

Any analysis of the genres must start with defining the genres of the fantastic and the birth of their interlinked semiospheres in the early twentieth century. In the next section, I will discuss the definition of fantastic arts, as well as the development of the genres of the fantastic from the early twentieth century onwards. In this study, I use the term *genre* in order to describe the various “modes” of fantastic literature. As Gary K. Wolfe (2011: 1) puts it: “Perhaps each of these [genres] is really no more than a mode of storytelling, or a set of specialized narrative tools, or a collection of writerly techniques.” In this technical sense, science fiction, fantasy, and horror fiction could be defined simply as easily identifiable *modes* of storytelling (and reading). A fantasy text could be defined as a text with some fantastic irrealia added into it to create a mode of storytelling that places it within the reader’s conception of the fantastic, while a supernatural horror novel could be much the same but written with narrative tools that enhance the feeling of suspension and fear in readers. Similarly, at its simplest, a science fiction text could be defined as a fantasy text that uses (pseudo-)technical descriptions as irrealia elements.

However, such simplified definitions rarely match the nuances of reality. If we look more deeply into genre fiction, how should fantasy, supernatural horror, and science fiction – not to mention their various overlapping and intermingling subgenres – be defined?

3.1 Defining the Genres of the Fantastic

To understand the birth and evolution of the genres of the fantastic, we must consider not only their origins but also their in part intermingled, in part separate development, as well as the development of the main cultural semiospheres in which the genres of the fantastic were born. During the past century, there have been a multitude of definitions for these genres. Some definitions have been founded on including all the genres of the fantastic (e.g. Wolfe 2011), such as fantasy, horror, and science fiction, while acknowledging their separate but often intermingling paths, while others have defined the genres separately

(e.g. Roberts 2009), ignoring the rest on different premises. For example, as noted by Adam Roberts (2009: 3), “Certainly it makes sense to separate out ‘science fiction’ from ‘fantasy’ on the grounds that the latter is magical; it always includes an excess that cannot be reconciled with or explained in terms of the world as we know it to be.” Or, as noted by Koponen and Sisättö (2011: 11, my translation):

“There are no supernatural elements in the world of the [science fiction] text: no wizards, divine interventions or magical laws. This distinguishes science fiction from especially fantasy literature, in which the worlds are based on the magical and the supernatural.”

One of the most influential (and most widely disputed) definitions of both science fiction and fantasy is that of Darko Suvin (1979: 7–8), who defines science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative [i.e. the *novum*] to the author’s empirical environment.” Suvin’s (1979: 7–8) attempt to define science fiction as a credible literary genre is based on distinguishing it from fantasy literature, which he calls:

[a] genre committed to the imposition of anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment [...] just another ghoulish thrill [...] a sub-literature of mystification. Commercial lumping of it into the same category as SF is thus a grave disservice and rampantly sociopathological phenomenon.

While influential in boosting science fiction research, Suvin’s views have been challenged repeatedly, for example by Miéville and Bould (2002: 44), who claim that both the genres of fantasy and science fiction create a “mental space – redefining – or pretending to redefine – the impossible.” Or, as noted by John Rieder (2008: 16), “Pigeon-holing texts as members or nonmembers of this or that genre is intellectually frivolous, whatever consequences it might have in terms of market value or prestige.”

In my view, any such separation between science fiction and fantasy may be questionable. An objective view on the development of the genres shows clearly that the genres have, though each with their distinctive features, evolved together for the past century: very often the difference between fantasy and science fiction has been the replacement of a sword or a spell with a raygun or a jetpack. The same authors have written both science fiction and fantasy, and in some cases the only difference between the genres is the mention of technology. The genres are largely inseparable both in the pulp era and later in the “science fantasy” subgenre exemplified by authors such as Jack Vance or Gene Wolfe. This is also true of contemporary stories of numerous subgenres such as *weird* or *new weird* fiction, in the works of authors such as Jeff VanderMeer and China Miéville, as well as in numerous anthologies edited by, for instance, Ann and Jeff VanderMeer.

Even so-called “hard” science fiction has its own tropes of divine interventions and magical resolutions, and often the only thing that separates them from works of literary

fantasy is that they are portrayed in scientific terminology and models, often quite thinly veiled by interventions of artificial intelligences and higher civilizations. This is evident, for example, in the appearance of the monolith that helped humanity to jump forward a step of evolution in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), and the theme of singularity in posthumanist science fiction, such as the *Culture* series by Iain M. Banks or the *Quantum Thief* trilogy by Hannu Rajaniemi.

In terms of defining the genres of the fantastic, a central question has been their origin. Since literary fantasy draws heavily on myths, folklore, and genres, such as the gothic novel, the beginnings of the genre are blended with earlier modes of storytelling to such an extent that exact points of origin are hard to fix. Can Edgar Allan Poe's prose be considered fantasy? What about *Beowulf* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or oral folklore and fairy tales?³⁶

Often definitions for the genres of the fantastic are presented as "long" or "short" histories. For example, Adam Roberts presents one version of a "long history" for science fiction, noting that "the 'long history' assumes, as its name might suggest, that sf is a cultural mode of relative antiquity, a view held by some commentators, though not, it should be noted, by most" (Roberts 2009: 3). In Roberts's view of the long history, "broadly speaking, we can argue that sf begins at the time that science, as we understand the term today, begins." Roberts (2009) makes a compelling case of placing the birth point of science fiction in the Copernican revolution, lining his case with examples of interplanetary tales from the seventeenth century. Some long histories are even more explicitly based on themes: the *Book of Revelation* in the Bible could be seen to contain elements that would now be recognized as science fiction and fantasy, Lucian's *Ἀληθῆ διηγήματα* (*A True Story*) from the second century AD contains many themes central to science fiction, and even *Gilgamesh* touches on themes of the fantastic. However, does using the tropes of the fantastic or discussing the themes of science fiction or fantasy necessarily make a text belong in the genres of the fantastic?

As noted by Roberts (2009: 8), "many critics remain unpersuaded that a 'long history' is the best way of understanding sf's origins." Although Roberts's case of showing post-Copernican space tales as a precursor of modern science fiction is persuasive, and although it provides a definitive starting point – and motivation or at least a causal relation – for science fiction, it may widen the concept of science fiction in a problematic way. Despite the fact that seventeenth century space tales (or earlier texts such as Lucian's) were certainly in the vein of science fiction as we know it, the question arises whether they are *relevant* in discussing twentieth century science fiction. Do they affect it even as a secondary influence, or were they just their own separate semiospheres that are not in effect related to the genres as we now know them?

³⁶ See e.g. Mendelsohn 2008, Bould, Butler, Roberts, and Vint 2009, and Wolfe 2011 for further discussion.

Another way to define the genres is through a “short history,” which I believe is of more use when discussing both modern fantasy and science fiction in the scope of this study. Arthur B. Evans’s (2009) “short history” places the birth of science fiction within the context of the industrial revolution and the social changes that accompanied it. In Evans’s (2009: 13) view, the transformation from the gothic novel to science fiction began with the transformation of the more positive utopian fiction of the eighteenth century into a darker imagination of science with the arrival of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), as well as other influential novels that established the image of the mad scientist betraying human values. However, according to Evans (2009:13), the literary tradition of the genre was born – *as a genre* – through two initial modes that have since dominated the genre: Jules Verne’s mode of “hard” or science driven science fiction, and H.G. Wells’ more fantastic science fiction:

The sf genre obtained its name and social identity during the early decades of the twentieth century in the American pulp magazines. But a recognizable literary tradition was, according to many critics, conceived during the industrial revolution and born during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Jules Verne’s *voyages extraordinaires* and H.G. Wells’ *fin-de-siècle* ‘scientific romances.’

As noted by Mendelsohn (2009: 52), when Gernsback founded *Amazing Stories* in 1926, he had “reason to believe there was an existing market for stories like those by H.G. Wells and Jules Verne.” This view would place the actual birth of the *genre* somewhere between the height of Verne’s and Wells’ popularity (from approximately 1860s to 1890s) and the success of *Amazing Stories* in the 1920s.

Even though Evans’s definition only discusses science fiction (and its two main sub-branches), it is also useful in distinguishing between the modes of fantasy. The most important borderline in Evans’s definition (2009: 13) is not between Wells and Verne, but between on the one hand “the recognizable literary tradition” recognized by “many critics,” and on the other hand “American pulp magazines,” in which the name and social identity of the genre originate. Attebery (2013: 5–6) makes a similar distinction between two histories, emphasizing that the intertwining of these histories means that “sf has never been either a purely literal or a purely popular genre. It has multiple readerships, and its readers often read across genre and canonical lines.” I view Evans’s and Attebery’s division between pulp and non-pulp – i.e. social identity and critical identity – as useful and see the same points (including the intertwining of the subgenres) applying to fantasy as to science fiction.

For the purposes of this study, a “short history” view on fantasy proves much more useful than a “long history,” which would take into account myths, folktales, and epics in a way useful for studying the beginnings of the fantastic, but ill-suited for studying fantasy as a modern genre.

Despite the dissenting views by Suvin (1979), viewing the development of the two genres as separate entities is based on wishful thinking about what the genres *should be*

and disregards their actual development. A view held by some modern scholars places all the “sister” genres of modern horror fiction, fantasy, and science fiction in the same family of “fantastic literature” (e.g. Wolfe 2011), that is, as genres that are heavily intermingled and share a common development and authors despite their own defining characteristics.

If we accept Evans’ origins of science fiction as pulp versus non-pulp (instead of the important but less genre defining view of Wells versus Verne), we can easily see the same distinction in fantasy literature. The literary non-pulp origins of the genre start with authors such as George MacDonald and Lord Dunsany, and later for example J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, E.R. Eddison, and others, with the social identity of the genre having been generated in American pulp fiction through authors such as Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft. Later on, especially after the paperback revolution (starting in the late 1950s) and specifically after Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* hit the US market in the 1960s, the development was driven through novels by authors ranging on the fantasy side from David Eddings to Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, R.A. Salvatore and countless other authors of the so-called mass market “bulk” fantasy literature. The same seems to apply to supernatural horror: its literary roots can be seen to have started in early Gothic novels and Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Lord Dunsany, and its popular roots and social identity originate in pulp literature and serials by authors such as H.P. Lovecraft and M.R. James, and later by authors such as Stephen King, Clive Barker, and Peter Straub.

In the following chapter, I examine the rise of the popular mode of the genres via the development of pulp fantasy, science fiction, and horror fiction. I concentrate on the evolution of the irrealia used in my case studies (chapter 4). Even though the origins of all the selected cases (*orcs*, *dwarves*, *goblins*, and *gnomes*) can be said to be in the *literary* mode of the fantastic, their evolution has closely followed the paths set by the *popular* mode of the genre.

3.2 The Rise of Pulp Literature

Most of the irrealia discussed in this study have their roots in colonial discourse and period racism (for orcs, see 4.1) and in the history of antisemitism (for goblins, gnomes, and dwarves, see 4.2). In the examined cases, though their roots are distinctly from various European cultural semiospheres, the irrealia have transcended their original main cultural semiospheres, whether through folklore or through fantastic (re)definitions of their substance. What is more, the notable points of the creation of the irrealia in the case studies (in chapter 4) are markedly related to literary fantasy through the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. However, as noted by Evans (2009: 13), while science fiction, fantasy, and supernatural horror reached their defining qualities as a literary genre through different non-pulp roots in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the social identities of the genres were born “during the early decades of the twentieth century in the American pulp magazines.”

Therefore, the irrealia originating in pulp literature are topical in this study, especially as they have affected the development of the genres in extensive ways, and they

continue to do so in contemporary literature. In this section, I analyze the impact of racism in irrealia in pulp literature in the United States in the golden age of pulp (approximately 1920–1950), which was distinctly rooted in the American cultural semiosphere and in the racial fears of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I do so by examining some notable authors and the application of racist discourse in pulp genre fiction and by considering the effects of the discourse in contemporary genre literature.

Let me note that I employ a rather wide definition of “pulp magazines,” which refers to the common definition of magazines printed on cheap paper (hence “pulp”). Although pulp magazines were generic in themes and genres at first, they started to specialize in the first decades of the twentieth century. Generic magazines gave way to genre specific magazines that focused on, for example, mystery stories, fantasy, science fiction, horror, romance, orientalism, and Western stories, thus creating genres and subgenres as they specialized further.

Pulp magazines were preceded by the “dime novel,” that is, novels and story collections sold with a “dollar book for a dime” slogan (Joshi 2001: 26). Dime novels premiered in the 1860s, and were popular until the first years of the twentieth century, after which they were replaced by pulp magazines. Generally action-oriented, dime novels were among the pioneers in creating a trend toward mass market genres, presenting tales of Western adventures, detective stories, and high school and college dramas (see Joshi 2001: 26). However, even though the dime novels contributed to starting the genre creation boom, it was pulp magazines that truly effected it for the genres of the fantastic.

Early pulp fantasy and science fiction magazines such as *Amazing Stories*³⁷ and *Weird Tales*³⁸ were widely published and circulated in the United States especially before World War II. Although similar fiction has been published on a wider time span, the term is typically applied to fiction produced in 1920–1960 (see Mendelsohn 2009: 52–53).³⁹ These magazines were instrumental in the development of the fantasy and science fiction genres, and the literary conventions and practices of the early “pulp magazines” created and shaped much of the jargon and contextual grammar of the semiospheres of fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural horror.

Although the commercial rise of pulp magazines started in the first decade of the twentieth century with magazines such as *All-Story* (1905–1920), which published both

³⁷ *Amazing Stories* started in 1926, continuing through various reincarnations to 2012.

³⁸ *Weird Tales* started in 1923, continuing to 1954, and afterwards through various reincarnations and hiatuses to 2014.

³⁹ The pulp phenomenon was rather broad: in addition to the titles mentioned here, notable pulp science fiction and fantasy magazines included *Fantastic Adventures* (1939–1952), *Wonder Stories* (1930–1955), *Planet Stories* (1939–1955), and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* (1940–1953), among others.

Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*⁴⁰ and *Under the Moons of Mars* in 1912, the Golden Age of pulp is typically seen to have started in 1926, when Hugo Gernsback (1884–1967) launched *Amazing Stories*. Hugo Gernsback's ideal saw science fiction (the term is usually attributed to Gernsback) as valid literature by combining the “educational” ideas of Jules Verne's “scientific novels” with the imaginary scope and freedom of H.G. Wells' “scientific romances.” Under Gernsback's editorship, writers such as E.E. “Doc” Smith explored both new styles⁴¹ and political themes. For example Smith's “Triplanetary” (*Amazing Stories*, 1934) discussed interracial relations in a hopeful, yet rather conservative tone.⁴²

While Gernsback introduced a sense of seriousness and a drive to discuss politics through fantastic metaphors and allusions into pulp fiction,⁴³ and while Burroughs's science fiction had already popularized the use of white supermen fighting inferior aliens and natives, the populist drive with heavily charged racial thematics can be said to have intensified with the ascension of John W. Campbell as the editor of *Astounding Stories*⁴⁴ in 1937. In earlier pulp fiction, due to both commercial demand and the writers' political affiliations, many pulp stories based their narration on populist concepts of racial segregation and white supremacy, either on an individual or cultural level.

As noted, it was not Campbell who introduced populist ideas into pulp fiction. Magazines concentrating on orientalism, Wild West mythos, or stories set in Africa were already brimming with racial stereotypes, and authors such as H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard had started writing racially motivated fantasy – mainly for *Weird Tales* (1923–1954) – in the previous decades. It must be also noted that racial thematics were also used and emphasized by several other publishers both based on their political views and through perceived economic reasons: pulp fiction was considered escapist literature for mainly young, Caucasian working class readers, and portraying superior white protagonists

⁴⁰ It should be noted that *Tarzan* does not directly fall into the genres discussed in this study. However, even though the series does not contain any (defining) irrealia, *Tarzan* integrally overlaps with and has influenced pulp SF and fantasy. What is more, it is an inseparable part of Burroughs's more SF themed corpus.

⁴¹ E.E. “Doc” Smith (1890–1965), marketed as the first real PhD in science fiction writing, can be considered the progenitor of the *space opera* subgenre.

⁴² For a comprehensive overview of pulp era science fiction, see Käkälä 2016.

⁴³ This is not to claim that political allusions were new to non-pulp science fiction as such; social and political allusions were widely used by authors such as Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein* and H.G. Wells in *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

⁴⁴ *Astounding Stories* started in 1930, was renamed *Astounding Science-Fiction* in 1938, and *Analog Science Fact & Fiction* in 1960. Since 1992, it has been published as *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*.

battling “others” of different race (whether human or nonhuman) was seen to answer the demands of the readership.

However, Campbell’s stewardship of *Astounding Stories* solidified this development as the *status quo* of pulp science fiction for the next three decades from 1937, as *Astounding Science-Fiction* fronted the field of pulp science fiction. Campbell “was a political conservative and left-wing writers were frequently forced to publish elsewhere” (Mendelsohn 2009: 52) often with less commercial success. Furthermore, it can be claimed that during Campbell’s era, the populist ideas on racial supremacy were forged into an ideology that lasted for decades. Even in 1968, when Samuel R. Delany offered his novel *Nova* for serialization to *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*, the novel was turned down due to its non-white protagonist (see Delany 1998).

Naturally, this phenomenon was not restricted to pulp literature or other early modes of fantasy: during the 19th century and the first decades of the twentieth century, imagery relating to archetypical – often heavily racist – physical and cultural descriptions was very common even in mainstream literature. The discussion of the manifestation of (period) racism in works of authors such as Dickens, Conrad, Steinbeck, and Twain – just to mention a few – has been ongoing for half a century, and the works of less well known authors are steeped in the stereotypes.

Now let me illustrate the use of racialized imagery in early twentieth century pulp fiction and discuss the racial imagery used by three turn of the twentieth century authors, Burroughs, Howard, and Lovecraft.

3.3 Burroughs, Howard, and Lovecraft

Even though some of the racialized imagery of the pulp fantasy magazines was partially toned down after the Second World War, the populist concepts that early pulp fiction built on had become ingrained in the fantasy and science fiction genres and still affect the genres as parts of their base grammar: as concepts that still, even if unintentionally, rely on their populist roots in racial stereotypes.

The populist presentation of ideas of racial supremacy can be exemplified through the works of three prominent and influential pulp authors of the earlier twentieth century: Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875–1950), Robert E. Howard (1906–1936), and H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937). While some of the pulp authors of the early twentieth century can be discussed in terms of unintentional period racism, at least the racism of Howard and Lovecraft was deeply rooted and very evident in their correspondence – and in some cases, correspondence with each other (Howard 2002).

Unlike many of their contemporaries, all three authors are well known today, with reprints available of all their major works. All three have enjoyed a renaissance and are counted among the canon of science fiction and fantasy literature (Rieder 2009: 28, 30–31; Miéville 2009: 511–515). Moreover, all three are among the most influential and imitated of the genre pulp authors, and much of their imagery has survived to

contemporary genre fiction. Although by no means the first to use heavily racist imagery in their pulp literature, Burroughs, Howard, and Lovecraft have perhaps had the greatest influence on the later developments of the genre.

Edgar Rice Burroughs is best known for his *Tarzan* series,⁴⁵ published in 1912–1965 and encompassing 25 novels. The *Tarzan* series tells the tale of a man marooned in an African jungle as a baby. As the protagonist is not only white but the son of a British lord, he quickly rises to become the “king” of the jungle. In the *Tarzan* series, the protagonist is portrayed as inherently superior – compared to the native people and animals – and representing justice and order in the midst of chaos. Representing “black” Africa as chaos and white colonialists as order is, of course, a typical strategy in colonialist literature and rhetoric as a justification for colonialism (Gant-Britton 1997: 47–48). *Tarzan* quickly became a transmedial franchise, spanning 23 films⁴⁶ including an animated version by Disney (1999), numerous stage and musical versions,⁴⁷ and comics series.⁴⁸

While Burroughs is best known for the *Tarzan* series, and while the use of period racist stereotypes can be best viewed through the non-fantastic premise of the series, his main contribution to genre fiction came with *Tarzan*’s sister series, *Barsoom*,⁴⁹ also known as the *John Carter of Mars* series. The *Barsoom* series tells a similar story as *Tarzan* of a white male protagonist being set in primitive surroundings and conquering every obstacle by simply being inherently superior to anyone else. However, unlike *Tarzan*, the setting is clearly science fiction (or rather, science fantasy): the protagonist, John Carter, finds himself marooned in Mars, where alien creatures mix with humanoid aliens. As with the *Tarzan* series, *Barsoom* has received transmedial adaptations and renderings, even if on a minor scale compared to *Tarzan*, with only two major films and some mainly short-lived comics series within the hyperdiegesis. However, the influence of the *Barsoom* series cannot be exaggerated: different versions of the almost superhuman John Carter as a colonizer among lesser aliens are abundant in later productions and different hyperdiegeses, and the lines drawn to Burroughs’s protagonist are clear even in contemporary franchises, such as Cameron’s *Avatar* (see Goodyear 2009).

For today’s reader, the *Tarzan* stories are full of period racism. African natives are typically described with characteristics such as savageness, yellow filed teeth, cannibalism, “low and bestial brutishness,” and with “poor brains” capable of “only the

⁴⁵ Starting with *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912a), serialized in the pulp magazine *The All-Story*, and later published as a novel (1914).

⁴⁶ With eight silent films that started with *Tarzan of the Apes* (1918), best known through Johnny Weissmuller’s performance in *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932) and his eleven subsequent films.

⁴⁷ Starting with *Tarzan of the Apes* (1921).

⁴⁸ Starting in 1948, and continuing ever since with various publishers and hiatuses.

⁴⁹ Starting with *Under the Moons of Mars* (1912b), serialized in the pulp magazine *The All-Story* the same magazine and year as the first *Tarzan* story, and later published as a novel retitled *A Princess of Mars* (1917).

most frightful of superstitious explanations.” As described below (4.1.1), all of these characteristics were commonly used in colonial discourse about African blacks (Fanon 1986, Scott 2010), and Burroughs’s text is no exception. Yet not uncommonly, Burroughs’s text also has some sympathetic readings. For example, slavery and exploitation of natives are condemned: “these poor blacks were held in virtual slavery, since after their terms of enlistment expired their ignorance was imposed upon by their white officers, and they were told that they had yet several years to serve” (Burroughs 1912a: Chapter I). However, even in these cases the natives are described as simple and gullible beings, and sympathy is reserved for natives that have been colonized: uncolonized natives are seen through a lens of savagery. The same applies to Burroughs’s *Barsoom*. In *Under the Moons of Mars* (1912b), the ancient (white) high civilizations of Mars have been destroyed by mixing “with the other great race of early Martians, who were very dark, almost black, and also with the reddish yellow race” (Chapter XI). In both series, the abjection of uncivilized – i.e. uncolonized – aliens of all kinds is highlighted through a love of torture and pain they inflict on others. In Burroughs’s *The Gods of Mars* (1918: Chapter III):

Often and again have I seen them roll upon the ground in mad fits of uncontrollable mirth when witnessing the death agonies of women and little children.

As with Howard, and as in much of early pulp fiction in general, the period racism is enhanced through the use of a superhuman version of a white male protagonist. Tarzan himself is described as the epitome of human perfection:

Though but ten years old he was fully as strong as the average man of thirty, and far more agile than the most practiced athlete ever becomes. And day by day his strength was increasing [with] superior intelligence and cunning. (1912a: Chapter V)

The only thing holding him back is trying to emulate the apes that brought him up, up to the point of “plastering himself from head to foot with mud” to resemble the apes who named him “Tarzan,” meaning “white-skin” in ape language. Tarzan’s moment of epiphany is finding himself better than his adopted tribe: “Tarzan is mightiest amongst you for Tarzan is no ape” (1912a: Chapter XI).

The image is visualized further in the second *Tarzan* story, *The Return of Tarzan*:⁵⁰ “this fearsome-looking white savage, this giant of a man upon whose massive rolling muscles and mighty chest the flickering firelight played” (1913: Chapter XVII). The same superhero image applies to *Barsoom*: John Carter’s image in *Under the Moons of Mars* is nearly identical with Tarzan:

⁵⁰ First serialized in the pulp magazine *New Story Magazine* in 1913 and published as a novel in 1915.

[He] was a splendid specimen of manhood, standing a good two inches over six feet, broad of shoulder and narrow of hip, with the carriage of the trained fighting man. His features were regular and clear cut, his hair black and closely cropped, while his eyes were of a steel gray, reflecting a strong and loyal character, filled with fire and initiative. His manners were perfect, and his courtliness was that of a typical southern gentleman of the highest type. (Burroughs 1912b: Foreword)

Burroughs creates the image of Tarzan as a protagonist by describing the other characters – both the apes and the African natives – through terms of abjection and contrast with Tarzan’s innate “heart and head and body of an English gentleman” (1912a: Chapter IX), while portraying the African natives through a greater lens of abjection than the apes. For example, Burroughs feasts on scenes of cannibalism with the natives, describing in detail the tortures they inflict on their victims before invariably dining on the flesh of their fellow humans. The apes, on the other hand, are presented as having a taboo against eating the flesh of their kind. After killing the ape Tublat in his adopted tribe, Tarzan ponders how “never had the thought of eating Tublat’s flesh entered his head. It would have been as revolting to him as is cannibalism to us.” After killing a native, Tarzan’s “inherent” civilized being is brought forward: “All he knew was that he could not eat the flesh of this black man, and thus hereditary instinct, ages old, usurped the functions of his untaught mind and saved him from transgressing a worldwide law of whose very existence he was ignorant” (1912a: Chapter IX) The natives are not allowed this “hereditary instinct” against “transgressing a worldwide law” – just two scenes later a tribe is shown to practice ritualistic cannibalism:

The warriors licked their hideous lips in anticipation of the feast to come, and vied with one another in the savagery and loathsomeness of the cruel indignities with which they tortured the still conscious prisoner. (1912a: Chapter XI).

John Carter’s image of racial superiority and his position as a “southern gentleman of the highest type” is enhanced through colonialist imagery: “our slaves fairly worshipped the ground he trod” (1912: Foreword). Similarly, Carter’s superiority is positioned through the racialized rhetoric of the alien other:

[The natives of Mars are] infinitely less agile and less powerful, in proportion to their weight, than an Earth man. (1912b, Chapter III).

In *The Gods of Mars* (1918), when Burroughs introduces the “Black Martians,” he creates them as an alien version of African blacks. Soon after their introduction, the Black Martians are no longer called Black Martians but just “blacks,” a clear reference to the American cultural semiosphere.

In *Tarzan*, the difference between the apes and natives is articulated explicitly, emphasizing the abjection of the natives: “He saw that these people were more wicked than his own apes, and as savage and cruel as Sabor, herself” (1912a: Chapter XI). This is explicated in *The Return of Tarzan* (1913): “the black men, and they to my mind are in most ways lower in the scale than the beasts” (Chapter IV) – though this racialized view is less pronounced when Tarzan gets to befriend one tribe of natives. The friendly tribe gets to share Tarzan’s dislike of cannibalism, and their physical features are described as differentiating from the common natives: “the flat noses and thick lips of the typical West Coast savage were entirely missing” (1913: Chapter XV). In effect, they become civilized by being colonized by Tarzan. The same applies to Burroughs’s *Barsoom*, in which the humanity of individual aliens becomes evident only when John Carter conquers and colonizes them and teaches them conservative family values to replace their alien culture.

As befits the image of the white superman of the pulp ideal, Tarzan is not contrasted with – and found superior to – only natives and animals, but with his more civilized kin: “And in London another Lord Greystoke was speaking to HIS kind in the House of Lords, but none trembled at the sound of his soft voice” (1912a: Chapter XI). In this pulp ethos, as discussed more extensively below in terms of Howard’s fiction, civilization was seen as shackles that limit the superiority of the white protagonists. This version of the pulp power fantasy can be seen to play to the wish-fulfillment and superhuman dreams of its mainly Caucasian, lower and middle class readership.

Unlike Burroughs and his racialized imagery, which is typical of the times – period racism, if you will – some of the other authors of the age used heavily xenophobic imagery as the basis of their narratives and narrated the breakdown of racial segregation into their tales as an element of horror and revulsion. For example, Robert E. Howard (1906–1936) and H.P. Lovecraft (1890–1937) used racial discourse intentionally. Their correspondence with each other (Derleth and Wandrei 1968, Lovecraft 2000, Howard 2002) shows that their use of racial themes was not only based on genre conventions and the intended audience’s need for wish-fulfillment, but were deliberately created with racial themes based on white racial supremacy. What is more, both were antagonistic toward miscegenation (see below).

As with Burroughs, Robert E. Howard’s protagonists are basically white supermen, whose superiority is a direct result of their Caucasian bloodline, whereas Howard’s narratives used explicit racial terminology with no subtlety:

But the Arabs were in a mood for sport. Since the girl would fetch them no profit on the market block, they would utilize her for their pleasure – and the humor of their breed was such as to turn men’s blood to icy water. (Howard 1931: 153) ⁵¹

⁵¹ Howard, *The Footfalls Within* (1931)

The theme of civilization as epitomes of decay, decadence, and freedom from its norms lifting the white protagonist to superhuman excellence are common in the pulp literature of the early twentieth century, as displayed in Burroughs's texts cited earlier in this section. However, Robert E. Howard has a specific zeal in preaching this message. Where Burroughs's heroes are defined by their inherent gentlemanliness, Howard's are idealized through barbarians' freedom from civilization. In Howard's narratives, his political views are discussed both within the diegetic framework and through an extra-diegetic narrator's voice. In many cases, the political message often feels superimposed and practically interrupts the storytelling. Howard does not constrain his message to be uttered by his barbarian heroes, but instead makes free-roaming barbarian heroes out of all of his protagonists, including the 16th century puritan Solomon Kane in "Wings in the Night" (1932: 52):

[T]he ancient empires fall, the dark-skinned peoples fade and even the demons of antiquity gasp their last, but overall stands the Aryan barbarian, white-skinned, cold-eyed, dominant, the supreme fighting man on earth [...] whether he be called Dorian, Saxon or Englishman.

Where Burroughs alludes, Howard preaches. For Howard, to be civilized is "to be entirely removed from nature and its forces" (Louinet 2005: 384). Howard confirms his position in his correspondence. In a letter to H.P. Lovecraft, he deplores that he had not discussed the issue extensively enough:

I have been dissatisfied with my handling of decaying races in stories, for the reason degeneracy is so prelevant in such races that even in fiction it cannot be ignored as a motive and as a fact if the fiction is to have any claim to realism. (Quoted in Louinet 2005: 385)

H.P. Lovecraft's sentiments on the issue mirror those of Howard, and they are even more vocal. In his fiction, degeneration of races is a common motif, and in his poems, he goes much further. In "New-England Fallen" (1912), the reason for the degradation of New England is in Lovecraft's eyes that "'foreign boors' infiltrate the society and corrupt it from within" (quoted in Joshi 2001: 71).

In the contents and style of his fiction, Lovecraft differs from Burroughs and Howard. Lovecraft's literary style resembles descriptive purple prose (evolving throughout his career) reminiscent of earlier gothic novels and Lord Dunsany. Unlike most pulp authors of the era, Lovecraft did not write adventure stories but desperate tales of existential crisis. And unlike Burroughs's and Howard's archetypal white superman pulp heroes, H.P. Lovecraft's protagonists are broken, neurotic human beings that are typically crushed by their understanding of the existential meaninglessness or the incomprehensibility of the universe – or by inbreeding or racial mixing.

Lovecraft's perhaps most enduring creation is Cthulhu,⁵² a great being that has come from beyond stars and time. Having conquered Earth once, it now sleeps beneath the waves of the Pacific Ocean in his sunken city of R'lyeh. Lovecraft described the physical image of Cthulhu as "[a] monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind" (as described in *The Call of Cthulhu*, 1928), but always with the "undescrivable" quality noted by Miéville.⁵³ Cthulhu represents forbidden knowledge and the imagery of inevitable doom that will come one day, "when the stars were right," with mankind only able to temporarily ward off the apocalypse that is to come.

In his well-documented racism, Lovecraft and his segregationist attitudes are very close to Howard's, as their mutual correspondence affirms. Lovecraft places his literary fears partially in miscegenation that in his fiction results in the degeneration of the race. Lovecraft uses this theme in "Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family" (1921), in which the protagonist ends his life after learning of his great-great-great-grandmother's heritage as an African "white ape of some unknown species." The fear of racial mixing is enough to condemn the titular character to oblivion and to ensure that his line would die with him. Similarly, in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" (1936), the fear and loathing the main character feels for the people of the fishing village of Innsmouth is explained by two-layered abjection: the protagonist can sense that they are the products of human procreation with the fishlike Deep Ones – before understanding that he himself is one and must leave the world of men to join his own people. The final sign of horror is the protagonist's acceptance of his half fish nature and the abjection of his existence. As Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi (2001: 305) describes the short story, "it is Lovecraft's greatest tale of degeneration; but the causes for that degeneration here are quite different from what we have seen earlier. This is clearly a cautionary tale on the ill effects of miscegenation, or the sexual union of different races."

Lovecraft's racism is not limited to fictional settings and allusions through irrealia. In his most notoriously racist poem, "On the Creation of Niggers" (1912), Lovecraft's racism reaches its zenith: the poem is an unadulterated burst of hatred toward black Americans. As explained by Michel Houellebecq (2008: 24), Lovecraft "brutally takes racism back to its essential and most profound core: *fear*." Lovecraft's hatred for the other races is well documented and, toward the end of his life, reaches nearly paranoid excesses in his correspondence:

⁵² Best known from "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928), also mentioned by Lovecraft in at least the short stories "The Dunwich Horror" (1929), "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1931), and the novel *At the Mountains of Madness* (1931).

⁵³ Even though described as *undescrivable*, fans have made every effort to visualize Cthulhu as can be seen from the hundreds of images to be found by an image search on the internet with Cthulhu's name.

The organic things – Italo-Semitico-Mongoloid – inhabiting that awful cesspool could not by any stretch of imagination be call'd human. They were monstrous and nebulous adumbrations of the pithecanthropoid and amoebal; vaguely moulded from some stinking viscous slime of earth's corruption, and slithering and oozing in and on the filthy streets or in and out of windows and doorways in a fashion suggestive of nothing but infesting worms or deep-sea unnamabilities. (Quoted in Houllébecq 2008: 106)

As noted by Houllébecq (2008: 106), at this point Lovecraft's racism had reached such heights that he himself could not define what race instigated his ire for the outburst above: "Italo-Semitico-Mongoloid" seems to encompass any human being not of pure Caucasian origin. However, in addition to blacks, Lovecraft had a special hatred toward Jewish people, even after marrying one, as noted in the words of his wife Sonia (quoted in Joshi 2001: 222). Likewise, Lovecraft's Nazi sympathies were not unknown, and he wrote about them in his correspondence. In a letter to Elizabeth Toldridge in 1932, Lovecraft wrote: "The crazy thing is not what Adolf wants, but the way he sees it & starts out to get it. I know he's a clown, but by God, I like the boy!" (quoted in Joshi 2001: 360).

As noted above, both Lovecraft and Howard saw the mixing of races as the ultimate downfall of mankind. Unlike Howard, whose heroes were at times of other races,⁵⁴ Lovecraft's heroes were either white or doomed by their mixed heritage. The stance is articulated clearly in Howard's short story *The Children of the Night* (1931), which employed some of Lovecraft's Cthulhu imagery: the protagonist suspects another character of being a mixed-blood descendant of early reptilian people and exclaims that all of these mixed-bloods must be terminated and destroyed for the safety of humankind – even though the mixed-blooded "antagonists" do not show any aggressive behavior or activities.

As the above examples show, the inclusion of racialized or racist irrealia and themes were not random or unconscious in early pulp literature. As the three authors discussed above are among the most prominent ones in pulp literature and among the best known pulp authors today, and as they cannot be considered exceptions in the field, the explicitly added racial thematics can be seen as pervading the semiospheres of the fantastic. Even though "neutralized" of their roots in many cases, the irrealia and thematic choices of the early twentieth century are still present in contemporary works, and racialized irrealia, from white superhuman protagonists to the dystopian results of racial mixing, are still present in the irrealia of the fantastic.

⁵⁴ For example Bran Mak Morn, whom Howard used in several stories, was the leader of Picts, a race of villains from his Conan stories. Again, as with the Picts in Howard's stories, these other races were always, in the end, corrupted and destroyed by mixed breeding (if the decadence of civilization did not destroy them first).

4 IRREALIA IN THE FANTASTIC

In this chapter, I present the development of irrealia in texts of the fantastic through two cases consisting of four popular irrealia:

- **The orc irrealis** with its roots in the descriptions of African blacks in colonial literature (4.1)
- **The goblin, gnome, and dwarf irrealia**, drawing on both folklore and antisemitism (4.2)

As we shall see, all of these four irrealia contain racial stereotypes borrowed from their source cultures, and all of them have evolved in their own directions despite some shared common roots. Especially as regards the partially interlinked *goblin*, *gnome*, and *dwarf* irrealia, my aim is to find out how two of these (dwarf and gnome) have changed in a way that has *shed* negative racial stereotypes, while the goblin irrealis has accumulated additional negative racial stereotypes. Meanwhile, the orc irrealis has progressed from a point of origin with racial signifiers into two recognizable forms: one containing heavily racist signifiers, and one containing a postcolonial discourse on those signifiers. The question this chapter attempts to answer is therefore: Why and how have these irrealia evolved into their current forms, and how have they either acquired or shed racial signifiers along their evolution?

My claim is that the mechanisms of acquiring negative racist or racial signifiers depends on whether an irrealis is perceived as *inclusive* or *exclusive*. As barbarography scholar Antti Lampinen (2013: 19) notes, “[T]he psychology of stereotyping is presumably related to the fact that human beings find conventional and culturally shared shorthand concepts ‘good to think with’,” and the advantages of received stereotypical imagery can be “strongly reinforced by cultural standards of inclusion and exclusion” (Lampinen 2013:19). Transferred to fantastic fiction, my claim is that when an irrealis is perceived as *inclusive*, it is reinforced by positive imagery from source culture realia. When it is perceived as *exclusive*, it is reinforced by negative imagery from source culture realia. The concept of the Other is created through exclusion, leading to loans of negatively perceived signifiers from the source culture, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

This leads me to the hypothesis that the perception of an irrealis as inclusive or exclusive affects how signifiers evolve within a semiospheric containment (see 2.1.5). If an irrealis is perceived as exclusive, it tends to maintain its negatively perceived physical and cultural signifiers. However, if an irrealis is perceived as inclusive, this either leads to the replacement of negatively perceived physical or cultural signifiers with positive ones, or to a poststructuralist reading of the old negative signifiers as positive or neutral ones. This, I claim, makes transmediality a central factor in the evolution of irrealia. Visual arts that give a physical form to literary irrealia can saturate the irrealia with physical signifiers that fill the gaps in the irrealia with inclusive or exclusive signifiers that will be associated with the irrealia in further literary readings (and in new literary texts) until a new visualization is accepted as more authentic and “overwrites” the older visualization.

Similarly, games that allow a player to play the abjectified Other go beyond exclusion and create inclusivity with the irrealia, thus providing new signifiers that will affect the irrealia in other media due to semiospheric containment.

As noted above, textual information in novels and short stories can be visualized in a film, danced in a ballet, or displayed in a painting. While the media dependent signifiers aim to produce the same signified within the adaptations of the same work, the signifiers work differently in each case, providing (at least) slightly different cues based on which readers can construe the signified. For example, for a reader of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955), the protagonist Frodo Baggins is described through textual cues. Readers know that Frodo is a hobbit, meaning he will be about a meter in height. As Tolkien was quite sparse with his descriptions of individual people, Frodo's description is given rather late in the first novel and is not very precise: "A stout little fellow with red cheeks [...] taller than some and fairer than most, and he has a cleft in his chin: perky chap with a bright eye" (Tolkien 1994: 163). The sparse description provides some signifiers with which readers can construct the visualized signified of Frodo, but much is left to their imagination. In the decades after the publishing of the novels, various artists, such as Alan Lee, created paintings and portraits of the characters of the novels, thus rendering further signifiers for readers acquainted with the visual arts based on the novels, typically portraying Frodo as a short youth with curly hair. Ralph Bakshi's animated filmatization of the novels provided another set of signifiers to visualize Frodo, with dark eyes and straight darkish hair. However, the film adaptations by Peter Jackson (2001–2003) recreated the image of Frodo, associating the signifiers of the visualized concept of Frodo with the performance by actor Elijah Wood. It can be claimed that the success and acceptance of Jackson's adaptations created the signified of Frodo through new signifiers, and furnished a new entry point into the character, which also affected the reading of the original texts. It is my claim that the process of creating new signifiers – and thus new meanings through the signifier-signified interpretation process – places adaptations into the sphere of transmediality. A film or a visual piece (painting, poster, toy) can act as an independent signified without most readers ever becoming familiar with the original texts.

When discussing racism, and especially period racism, I concentrate on explicit examples of racialized allusions. This may be seen as overly cautious, but I want to make sure that I do not fall into the trap of treating unrelated or unintentional terms with no racial connotations as racist. In particular, I leave out all terms in which darkness can be considered anything other than the skin color. The dichotomy of dark versus light treated as evil versus good in discussing lighting is widespread from the Genesis to the Cult of Mithras, from the Dark Ages to the Age of Enlightenment, and from modern fantasy to European, Asian, and African fairy tales.

I will approach each of the two cases and four irrealia from a different viewpoint. That is, although keeping to my main theoretical framework in each, I use a different angle in each of the studies so as to illuminate different modes of analyzing the irrealia and its development. In the section on orcs, my focus is on postcolonial interpretations, while in the case of goblins, gnomes, and dwarves, I refer to Saussurean semiotics in the analysis

of antisemitic signifiers. In my conclusions, I tie these readings together in chapter 4.3 to show how the different routes and mechanisms of the evolution of irrealia can be viewed from a common standpoint.

4.1 On the Evolution of Orcs as an Irrealis

J.R.R. Tolkien's (1892–1973) work provides useful examples of the semiospheric containment of racial stereotypes. Tolkien's influence on the genre of fantasy cannot be exaggerated: *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) created and revived many fantasy concepts from folk tales and epics. Even though many of these concepts were not originally Tolkien's, his works presented them in ways that were to become the foundation of fantasy imagery as allusive metonyms for the semiospheres of the fantastic. Some of these conventions were based on concepts and traits the audience could understand as allusions to their real world concerns and – at times strongly prejudiced – racialized archetypes.

For example, the “good” protagonists are mainly described as “fair,” while evil characters are practically always described as dark-skinned or dark (or representing other non-Caucasian ethnicities). In Tolkien's work, external evil comes from the east and the south, and the land of salvation lies to the west. The evil races are given properties that can be easily connected to prejudiced real world caricatures of racial archetypes, such as cannibalism and tribal structures. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the imagery of darkness and light was used both in conjunction with racial degeneration (when, for example, Númenóreans degenerate to Black Númenóreans) and in individual fall from grace (e.g. when Saruman loses his status as the Saruman the White due to his treachery, or when Smeagol transforms into the cave-dwelling and cannibalistic Gollum). To be sure, not all of these uses of dark and light are linked to skin color but rather to the structural metaphors of light and darkness or day and night. Similarly, salvation lying in the West is an old motif. However, in many cases, the transformations are reflected in the ethnic descriptions of the fallen races and individuals.

A good example of this phenomenon is the irrealis of *orcs*, one of the major signifiers of fantasy literature. Although the word *orke* entered the *Oxford English Dictionary* as late as in 1656⁵⁵ as related to giants and ogres, the history of orcs as a

⁵⁵ The first literary mention of *orc* can be found in *Beowulf* (~8th–11th century): *þanon untýdras ealle onwocon / eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas*, translated to modern English by William Morris and A.J. Wyatt as “But offspring uncouth thence were they awoken / Eotens and elf-wights, and ogres of ocean” (1895). Considering Tolkien knew *Beowulf* well enough to write his own translation of and commentary on the epic poem (published posthumously), *Beowulf* is most likely the origin of Tolkien's use of the term, rather than more modern uses such as Milton's *Orcus* and *orcs* in *Paradise Lost* (1667) or William Blake's *orc* in *America a Prophecy* (1793) and some later texts. Tolkien himself discusses the origin of the term in more general terms: “the word is as far as I am concerned actually derived from Old English *orc* ‘demon’, but only because of its phonetic suitability” (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 177–178).

modern irrealis started with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and attained most of its recognizability after the paperback boom lifted *The Lord of the Rings* to bestseller status in the United States in the late 1960s. Tolkien's orcs were very much the product of colonial imagery of the Other. In *The Lord of the Rings*, all of Tolkien's descriptions relating to orcs are consistent with the colonial portrayals of African blacks. Orcs are mainly described in the books with adjectives or descriptive phrases that were commonly used of African blacks in colonial literature. Typical examples of this imagery include dark skin: *dark*, *dark-skinned*, *black-skinned*, and *black* are typical adjectives, and *swart* or *swarthy* are used frequently (nine times in the novels, three times in the appendices, not always for describing orcs, but always as pejoratives). Cannibalistic traits and practices, tribalism, weak language skills, bad temper, animalistic grunts, childlike simplicity combined with "low" evil cunning, and ape-like or animalistic features – such as long arms with knuckles dragging on the ground – were all used in colonial discourse about African blacks (see Fanon 1986, Scott 2010). Such features are used to describe orcs as well, as is their "nature" of only being capable of serving a greater master as slaves. The first time the protagonists actually encounter orcs in Moria, they are introduced as "large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor" (Tolkien 2009: 342), and the orc chieftain's "broad flat face was swart" (Tolkien 2009: 343). When Merry and Pippin are taken captive by orcs, their captors declare that they are "servants of [...] the White Hand: the Hand that gives us man's flesh to eat" (Tolkien 2009: 467). Grishnákh, one of their captors, is described as having "very long arms that hung almost to the ground" (Tolkien 2009: 467), and when the orcs discuss the humans pursuing them, they call them "Whiteskins" (Tolkien 2009: 472).

I am not claiming intentional racism on Tolkien's part, and in fact others such as Rearick (2004), Croft (2008), and Dimitra (2009) have discussed the topic extensively. My aim is to use these notions to support my hypothesis: When there is no readily defined jargon or contextual grammar in the semiosphere of a genre, authors are prone to create the fantastic concepts by referring to existing phenomena – such as colonial concepts and literature in this case – in their generic cultural semiosphere. Thus, they tend to saturate the new irrealia with allusions and metaphors relating to existing concepts and stereotypes.

It should also be noted that the cultural dichotomies of self and the Other used of the orcs are older than African slave trade. In the section on goblins, gnomes, and dwarves (see 4.2), I discuss how some of the dichotomies have been used in antisemitic descriptions in Europe since the Middle Ages. For example, the tropes of blood thirstiness and rudimentary language skills have been used commonly to help create the concept of the Other and erect boundaries between ethnicities and social classes. Categorizing other races as cruel or intellectual inferiors is typical in the history of humankind: Lampinen (2013: 41, 363), for example, notes how the discourse on Thracians in classical Rome centers on such abject characteristics. In Greek and Roman discourses on barbarians, Plato "mentions Scythians, Persians, Carthaginians, Celts, Iberians and Thracians as warlike people, all of whom are prone to intoxication when drinking" (Lampinen 2013: 45), and the same blood thirstiness was used to describe Jews in Blood Libel legends during the Middle Ages in

Europe (see 4.2). Linguistic deficiency (poor language skills of the inferiors) was used for example in the Later Imperial era of Rome (AD ~300–400) about northern barbarian slaves and their Roman masters, who were seen to “differ from each other as much as beasts of burden from their human masters” (Lampinen 2013: 334).

However, as used in Euro-American discourse cultural semiospheres, the allusions link the use of such tropes to colonial discourse and African blacks, since they are the most recent major discourse with related allusions. The abject characterizations were central in the tenets of slave ownership discourse and were used to support slave ownership legislation (Burnham 1987: 189). Although slavery was abolished in 1865 in the United States, the abject features used in the discourse continued to be present in early twentieth century fiction (see also 3.2–3.3) as well as in the discourse of the opponents of the African-American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Similarly, in the latter part of the twentieth century, the same characteristics were used in South Africa by the proponents of apartheid in political discourse (see Thaver 2006: 154).

4.1.1 Orcs as Abjects

The positioning of orcs within the fictional setting of *The Lord of the Rings* fits Julia Kristeva’s (1982: 9) concept of the *abject*. For Kristeva, the abject consists of the taboos that exist within ourselves and our societies and which we externalize into the categories of “filth” and “perversion,” including corpses, spoiled food, excrement, and cultural taboos, as well as our feelings regarding them. For Kristeva (1982: 15), “[t]he abject is related to perversion. The sense of abjection that I experience is anchored in the superego. The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them.” Based on Kristeva’s (1982: 9,17) terminology,⁵⁶ orcs are a pure reflection of the abject: “Abjection is above all ambiguity,” and “Abjection appears as a rite of defilement and pollution – Abjection persists as *exclusion* or taboo.” On this view, Tolkien’s orcs are a mirror of the contemporary cultural taboos of the time, embodying both the colonialistic rhetoric used of African blacks and the decline of the pastoral image in Britain, associating the working classes with negatively perceived effects of industrialization and the modernization of society. The abject status of the orcs is emphasized not only by their inhumanity but also in their glee in being inhuman. As Kristeva (1982: 18) notes (on Dostoyevsky’s *The Possessed*), “Abjection [...] wavers between the fading away of all meaning and all humanity, burnt as by the flames of a conflagration, and the ecstasy of an ego that, having lost its Other and its objects, reaches [...] the height of harmony with the promised land.” The only solution found for the orcs in Tolkien is mass genocide, the wiping out of all of orc-kind in a massive ethnic cleansing

⁵⁶ It should be noted that my use of abject differs slightly from Kristeva’s. For Kristeva, the abject can be seen to be “of the body, off the body” – e.g. excrement, vomit, dead tissue, corpses, etc. In this study, my use extends the term to a more abstract level, including monstrous bodies (at least those discussed in this study) as metaphoric representations typically based on human bodies.

by the protagonists. This too echoes Kristeva's (1982: 16) stance on the abject: "An unshakable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of abjection is to be hemmed in and thrust aside. Religion, Morality, Law." According to Darieck Scott (2010: 4),

[B]lackness functions in the Western society as a repository for fears about sexuality and death – fears, in other words, about the difficulty of maintaining the boundaries of the (white male) ego, and fears about acknowledging the repressions and renunciation on which Western civilization depends. As such, blackness is an invention that accomplishes the domination of those who bear it as an identity.

It must be noted that although Tolkien's description of orcs fits the descriptions of African blacks from the colonial era word for word, Tolkien himself, in his correspondence, saw orcs in different racialized terms: "The Orcs are definitely stated to be corruptions of the 'human' form seen in Elves and Men. They are (or were) squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes: in fact degraded and repulsive versions of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol-types" (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 274).

Interestingly, Tolkien leaves out one prominent element of the abjectification of African blacks: that of hypersexuality – typically emphasized in colonialist discourse (see Fanon 1986: 63–64). However, this is most likely the result of Tolkien avoiding sex or sexuality in his works. That is, the main corpus of his texts has practically no mentions of sex or sexuality. In his posthumously published – and edited – *The Silmarillion* (1977), he notes that "the Orcs had life and multiplied after the manner of the Children of Ilúvatar" (Tolkien 1977: 50), that is, by reproducing through sex. Other than this single mention, the only surviving note from Tolkien about orcs even having two genders comes from an unpublished letter from 1963: "There must have been orc-women. But in stories that seldom if ever see the Orcs except as soldiers of armies in the service of the evil lords we naturally would not learn much about their lives. Not much was known" (quoted in Gee 2004). Even though gender or reproduction are not discussed, Tolkien's (1937: 199) mock-archaic language touches on the notion of parentage, as the orc Bolg, an antagonist in *The Hobbit* is introduced as "Bolg, the son of Azog." However, whether this should be taken as a confirmation of sexual reproduction is not certain, since *The Hobbit* was written in a much lighter vein than Tolkien's later works, and since Tolkien's ideas on the origins of orcs fluctuated widely toward the end of his literary career. In the end, Tolkien seems to have found the orcs troublesome as a concept, as shown in his comments on their origins. Especially in his correspondence, Tolkien wavers between having the orcs originating in corrupted elves, man-elf hybrids, the slime of the earth, or transmogrified from the beasts of the land (see Carpenter 2000: 151, 178, 190, 191, 195, 287, and 451). In other words, Tolkien's views varied, and as he died before finishing *The Silmarillion* (1977), there is no final statement by the author.

On the few occasions Tolkien (1994: 721) gives his orcs a non-abjective voice in the *The Lord of the Rings*, their discussions are rather human-like, filled with longing for freedom from slavery, and with worries about the future:⁵⁷

“What d’you say? – if we get a chance, you and me’ll slip off and set up somewhere on our own with a few trusty lads, somewhere where there’s good loot nice and handy, and no big bosses.”
“Ah!” said Shagrat. “Like good, old times.”
“[...] Always the poor Uruks to put slips right, and small thanks. But don’t forget: the enemies don’t like us any more than they love Him, and if they get topsides on Him, we’re done too.”

In general, however, Tolkien treats the orcs as straightforward objects. Giving occasional insights into their thoughts provides a cognitive dissonance in which reader are given seeds of sympathy for the monsters, who are otherwise treated as stereotypical objects that exist only for the protagonists to kill in abundance.

As Edmund Wilson (1956: 312) noted in his review “Oo, those Awful Orcs!” in *The Nation*, one of the problems with Tolkien’s monsters is their significant lack of actual evil actions: “There are ogreish disgusting Orcs, who, however, rarely get to the point of committing any overt acts.” By their actions, orcs can in fact be considered more humane than the protagonists. For example, unlike the human protagonists who slaughter orcs casually and to the last orc, orcs repeatedly take prisoners and give them medical attention when required. Of special note is Gimli’s and Legolas’s game of orc slaughter in the battle of Helm’s Deep in *The Two Towers* (1954), with the protagonists yelling numbers as they compete in who slaughters the most orcs. Here orcs shed what little individuality they might have elsewhere in the books, and readers are asked to enjoy the characters’ good-natured competition in which killing is only numbers and points. In such passages, readers are supposed to vilify the orcs based only on who they are, not on what they do. At the end of the series, the newly crowned Aragorn, while giving his human foes a chance to surrender, goes on to commit a genocide of orcs. As Wilson (1956: 312) states, “The ring is at last got rid of by being dropped into a fiery crater, and the kingdom of Sauron ‘topples’ in a brief and banal earthquake that sets fire to everything and burns it up, and so releases the author from the necessity of telling the reader what exactly was so terrible there.” This is the conclusion offered by Tolkien: even after their master’s death, the freed orcs must be murdered because of their inherent evil in not belonging to the world of humans, the true sign of an object.

Much of the recent discussion and research on Tolkien’s work concentrates on the covert representation of colonialism in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the responsibility of the protagonists for the acts of genocide and conquest mentioned above. As noted by R.T.

⁵⁷ However, as discussed later, even this relatively non-abjective voice only shifts the focus of objectness, as the orcs tend to shift to speak in a register alluding to – at least through resemblance – working class English of the early twentieth century.

Tally (2010: 27), “from the Orcs’ point of view, the War of the Ring may very well be seen as a war of Elvish and Gondorian aggression against their own ways of life. In these texts, Tolkien’s Orcs are given just enough humanity to make one wonder.” Especially the fascist overtones of governance and conquest have been explored by scholars such as Dimitra (2009), Fircchow (2008), and Croft (2004), who have extensively deconstructed and analyzed the actions of Tolkien’s “heroes” through their actions toward the orcs and other demonized “enemies.”

4.1.2 Evolution of the Orc Irrealis

After Tolkien, orcs have become one of the most enduring and popular irrealia in fantasy. As much as the changes in the portrayal of orcs themselves, the way orcish cultures are presented – or typically not presented – provides an intriguing view of the evolution of the source cultures. Of especial interest is the evolution of orcs from Tolkien’s abjects to the postcolonially deconstructed empowered subjects and the tragic victims of today’s culture.

In addition to semiospheric containment, orcs provide a useful example of the effects of transmediality in irrealia, especially visual representation. Even though the concept of orcs originates in literary fiction, one of the main breakthroughs for orcs as an irrealis came with *Dungeons & Dragons*, the immensely popular roleplaying game first published in 1974, with many subsequent editions ever since. *Dungeons & Dragons* portrays orcs as major villains, originally with much more animalistic features (including pig snouts) than the original Tolkienesque orcs. In subsequent editions, the imagery returned to Tolkien’s original descriptions. In the early versions of the *Dungeons & Dragons* games, orcs had about as much of a society as in Tolkien’s works: next to none. They were, however, allowed to exist free from slavery, mainly forming small bands that inhabited rooms in dungeons for no apparent reason. They were still very much abjects and given voice only as a reflection of evil, and their all-encompassing foulness and hostility were their only basic characteristics.

Although some perspective was given to orcish ways of life outside the main texts of *Dungeons & Dragons*,⁵⁸ in the canonized texts, no thought was given to orcish societies, culture, or any other aspect of their lives than their animosity toward the “good” races, who – within the game – repeatedly invaded the homes of the “evil” orcs and slaughtered them for money and experience points. As Kristeva (1982: 1) emphasizes, “The abject has only one quality of the object — that of being opposed to I.”

⁵⁸ For example Roger E. Moore’s (1982) “The Half-Orc Point of View” in the magazine *Dragon*.



Image 1

Dungeons & Dragons provided the first noteworthy visualization of orcs.⁵⁹ As depicted by David C. Sutherland III in the original *Monster Manual* (1977) for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 1st ed.* (see Image 1), orcs were transformed into bestial creatures with lean humanoid bodies, bestial snouts, and heads resembling those of pigs. However, this imagery would not stick, as Tolkien's irreals carried far too much weight with the game's main audience. In fact, *The Lord of the Rings* novels have been described as one of the main portals into (early) fantasy roleplaying. As new editions of the games have come out, the imagery has reverted to that of Tolkien.

In 1984, Iron Crown Enterprises launched *Middle-earth Roleplaying Game*, the first officially licensed roleplaying game set in the *Lord of the Rings* franchise. It is noteworthy that the game allows the creation of orcs as player characters, though there are notes to the effect that "The Gamemaster may wish to restrict the player's choices to certain 'acceptable' races" (1984: 24), and that orcs and trolls are typically not free of external domination by evil masters. However, it is suggested that "a Gamemaster running a game set in the 4th Age of Middle-earth (i.e., after the destruction of Sauron and The Ring) might allow player characters to be Orcs and Trolls" (1984: 24). In addition, the race table marks orcs, half-orcs, and other monstrous races as "not normally player characters" (1984: 24). In the race description section, orcs are described as "hideous," "twisted and perverted," and though not inherently evil, as "culturally and mentally predisposed toward Darkness" (1984: 106). In skin color (1984: 106), orc sub-types are limited to "deep grey or black hides" (common orcs), like Dark men (half-orcs), and "black/grey hides" (Uruk-hai). It should be noted that *Middle-earth Roleplaying Game* provides minimal information on the orcish culture, deriving what little it includes mainly from descriptions in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* novels.

Although the descriptions of orcs and orcish culture were sparse in *Middle-earth Roleplaying Game*, various game supplements have added more information. In the supplement *Lords of Middle-earth III – Hobbits, Ents, Orcs & Trolls* (1989), orcs are further delineated, with descriptives mainly borrowed from Tolkien. The supplement portrays the creation of the orcish race from the fair elves as follows: "The wonderful Elven skin [...] became dark, coarse, scarred" (1989: 84) and "The dancing Elven forms

⁵⁹ Bakshi's animated *The Lord of the Rings* arrived a year later, in 1978.

became brute, with [...] long arms sometimes dragging the ground, and posture like an ape” (1989: 84). The link between virtue and physical build is emphasized: “There has never been a recorded example of anything like a virtuous orc [...]. Some have supposed that if such an alignment alteration occurred within an Orc, it might, over a period of time, surface in the beautifying of the physique. Perhaps, in the extreme, something of an Elvish form might re-emerge” (1989: 87). Orcish society is still described minimally, with brief mentions of tribalism, cannibalism, and slavery (1989: 89-90).

In the late 1980’s, the *Dungeons & Dragons* supplement *The Orcs of Thar* (1988) provided a somewhat confusing case of alleviating some of the racism in the depictions of orcs – or widening the scope of racially stereotyped descriptions to a wider set of minorities. By now, orcs had become a well known irrealis, gaining popularity not only through Tolkien’s novels and the *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign settings, but also through the rivalling *Warhammer* products. Playing orcish armies was a commercial success in the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* and *Warhammer 40,000* miniature games, and *Dungeons & Dragons* tried to follow suite with expansions such as *The Orcs of Thar*.⁶⁰ However, orcs were still only given characteristics of the abject – they were fully portrayed through vileness, evil, and as a dark mirror of humanity at its worst. They were still not given viable societies: the cities and nations of orcs are huge gatherings of warriors and their chiefs, with no valid economies or pastimes for orcs – other than tormenting others and planning wars. Even though their skin color ranged freely between pink and dark (via grayish green), this attempt to remove skin color as a defining point of the irrealis was badly botched by adding multiple new layers of racist imagery. This is evident in the description of the “yellow orcs” in *The Orcs of Thar* (1988: 31): “Another sub-race of orcs, identifiable by their dull yellow hides. Some come with ugly rat or pekingese face,” a description that could have emerged straight from a 1950s pulp novel with racist imagery about East Asians.

⁶⁰ Beyond the main texts of the *Dungeons & Dragons* brand, in the *Dragon* magazine, Joseph Clay’s “Hey, Wanna Be a Kobold?” (1989), published a few months after *The Orcs of Thar*, offered players the chance to play orcs, kobolds, and goblins.

As can be seen in *The Orcs of Thar* (see Image 2) and from the above quote, the racial abject features used by Tolkien were not removed, but widened to include racist imagery associated with Asian cultural minorities. The signifiers of tribal imagery used in colonial imagery are abundant: the haircuts of the orcs, the skulls hanging from the wall, implied cannibalism, the tent with an open fire inside, the shamanistic older orc, racialized “Chinese” queues and goatees, and the lack of hygiene and breach of good manners of the orc picking his nose. Such aspects can be seen as typical abject descriptives used in early racial stereotypes of Native Americans, Chinese, Mongols, Africans, and other cultures viewed as tribal in colonial literature.

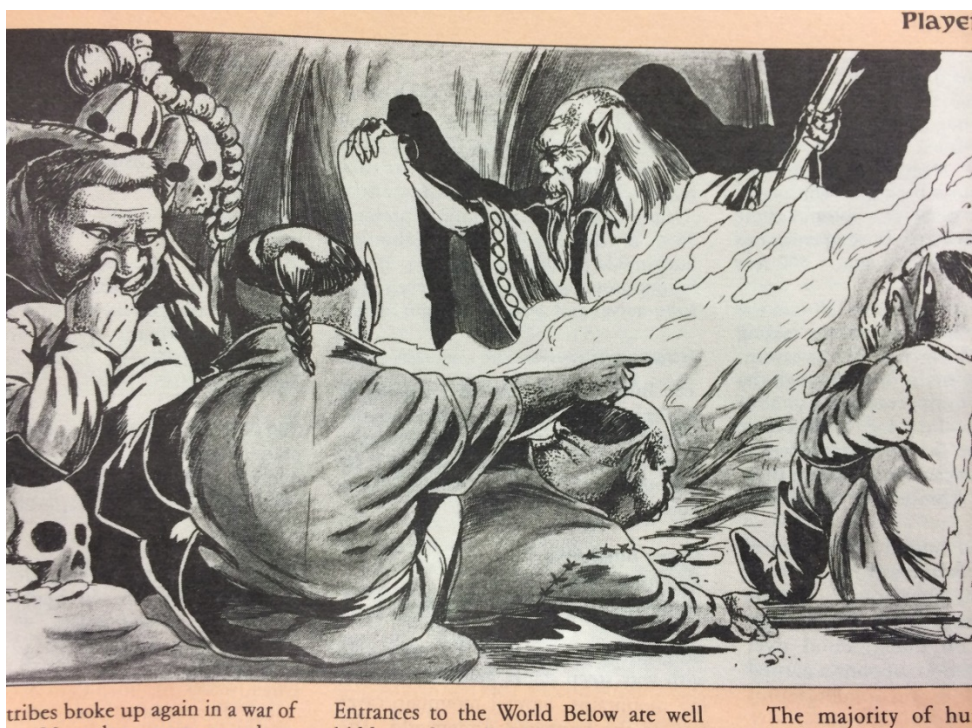


Image 2

A major breakthrough for the irreals came through a miniature game: *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* (originally published in 1983) included orcs – also known as Greenskins – as one of the armies the players could use to fight against other armies. *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* orcs were rather similar to Tolkien’s orcs but presented as caricatured versions, with huge, oversized hands, savage jaws with a severe underbite of spiked teeth and massive heads with practically no necks (see Images 3 and 4).

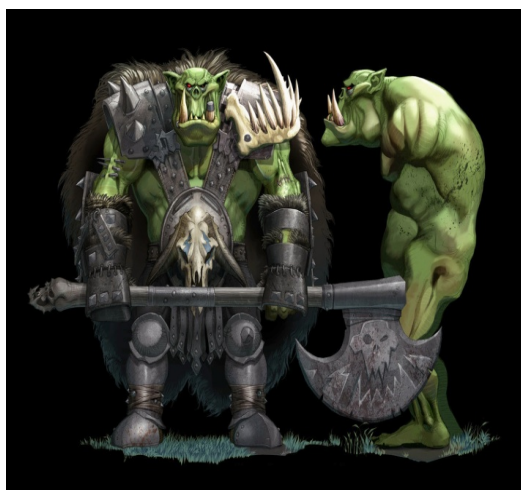


Image 3

The satirization is enhanced with the description of their culture, which must be noted is the first actual internally coherent description of an orcish culture: as with Tolkien and *Dungeons & Dragons*, the orcs are parodically violent, living in a culture based on “WAAAGH!” – their term for war.

The lack of sexuality in Tolkien’s fantastic races is given a humorous twist: as discussed in later editions of the game, *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* orcs reproduce asexually from fungal spores. Thus orcish societies are considered fungal outbreaks or epidemics, which explains for the first time the lack of orcish agriculture. *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* brought one significant visual signifier to the orc irreals: green skin, which may have been the result of green fitting miniature painting better than the brown or black of Tolkien’s orcs.

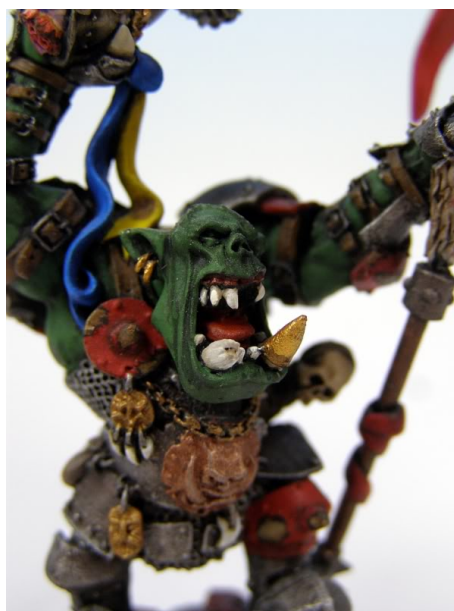


Image 4

It should be noted that in the third edition of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* as well as in the roleplaying version of the game, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* (1986), attributes from Tolkien’s irreals were revived with the introduction of “black orcs.” These black orcs are inherently evil, bloodthirsty cannibals, whose “long centuries of inbreeding” have, in accordance with the semiospheric containment of their abject elements from Tolkien’s irreals, led to them having dark skins. Later editions have kept the name, but the skin color has changed mostly to green.

The third major evolutionary phase came in 1987 from *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*'s science fantasy sister, *Warhammer 40,000*, a miniature game set in a dystopian distant future where a religiously fanatic fascist empire of humankind wages war against equally dystopian fantasy races. In *Warhammer 40,000*, orcs – within the setting, 'orks' with a 'k' – are changed even further. The treatment of orks as reproducing from fungal spores in fact started in *Warhammer 40,000* (and was later copied to its fantasy counterpart). Orks of the future are green not only due to their fungal nature but from being partially photosynthetic – making them a kind of mobile lichen that resemble bald, green gorillas or rhinoceroses (see Image 5). Their culture combines Tolkien's orcs more explicitly with football hooliganism. For example, the colloquial language use is present, but in the form of lower class slang – for example, the orks refer to themselves as *boyz* and to ork "nobility" (a misphrase representing violent orks that have gained respect in their peers' views) as *nobs*.



Image 5

Nearly alongside *Warhammer 40,000* came another breakthrough – or setback. In the early 1980s, TSR, Inc., the maker of the *Dungeons & Dragons*, decided to market their upcoming *Dragonlance* setting with a book series. As it happened, the *Dragonlance* books⁶¹ (spanning dozens of novels and short stories) were published right after the success of David Eddings's *Belgariad* series,⁶² leading to the book series easily outselling the game campaign setting. Although *Dragonlance* did not contain orcs, its success prompted TSR to widen its book catalogue to its other settings as well. Some of the settings were moderate successes (*Dark Sun*, *Greyhawk Adventures*), while others became bestsellers (e.g. the *Dark Elf* books set in the *Forgotten Realms* campaign setting), with many of the books having orcs as villains, cementing this irreals as a stock fantasy figure. Between 1984 and 1997, TSR published 242 novels set in the campaign settings. After

⁶¹ The series started with *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* (1984) by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman.

⁶² The series started with *Pawn of the Prophecy* in 1982 and continued by four novels in two years.

TSR went bankrupt in 1997, Wizards of the Coast has continued publishing both the old lines as well as new ones. The success of orcs as a figure in stock fantasy was such that at times, some authors who wrote fiction for orcless settings forgot that the setting they wrote for did not include orcs as an irrealis. For example, Mary Kirchoff's novel *Kendermore* (1989), set in the orcless *Dragonlance* setting, has a half-orc (with one orc parent) character.

The TSR and Wizards of the Coast novels did not add new features to orcs: mainly, they amalgamated Tolkien's vision with Warhammer's orcs. Orcs varied from parodically savage green-skinned monsters with a considerable underbite to Tolkien's dark-skinned cannibals with animal features, and everything in-between.



Image 6

pastime is described: "When not actually fighting other creatures, orcs are usually planning raids or practicing their fighting skills" and "the chief orc deity is Gruumsh, who tolerates no sign of peaceability among his people."

At the same time, the development has continued on Wizards of the Coast's *Dungeons & Dragons* game line. Although the third edition (2000) *Monster Manual* did not comment on the skin color of orcs, in the visual art found next to the description (see Image 6), orcs still have dark (grayish) skin with shades of brown, and the previous imagery of the colonized other is enhanced in the form of muscular and overtly large arms and hands, and "tribal" details such as skulls on their belt and wild, unkempt hair. Their snouts have receded to large nostrils, and their posture is that of menace and violence. Their armor is depicted as ragged, with skin showing between the pieces.

In the third edition *Monster Manual* (2000: 204), orc culture is at par with Tolkien. Orcish



Image 7

The fourth edition of the game (2008, see Images 7 and 8) fares no better: “Bloodthirsty marauders and cannibals, orcs venerate Gruumsh and thereby delight in slaughter and destruction.” The fourth edition retains the tribal imagery of the third edition. The concentration is still in savage, colonial signifiers of tribalism, such as skulls, mismatched, primitive pieces of armor, and savage hairstyles. The setting is that of wilderness and war, and as common in colonial visualizations, the faces of the objects are interchangeable, with few marks of individuality. In both images, the only individualizing features in the faces of the orcs are scars, thus emphasizing the brutality of the objects.

Orcs are even further abjectified in the fifth edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (2014), in which the need to breed with other races is introduced to orcdom in the form of high procreation drive. The desire for procreation within the orcish race was already present in the third edition *Monster Manual* (2000: 204), but the fifth edition widens the drive to include other races through implied rape. This echoes Fanon’s (1986: 63–64) note on hypersexuality as a typical element in colonial discourse when discussing African blacks:

Luthic, the orc goddess of fertility and wife of Gruumsh, demands that orcs procreate often and indiscriminately so that orc hordes swell generation after generation. The orcs’ drive to reproduce runs stronger than in any other humanoid race, and they readily

crossbreed with other races. When an orc procreates with a non-orc humanoid of similar size and stature such as human or dwarf, the resulting child is either an orc or a half-orc. (5th edition *Monster Manual*, 2014: 245)

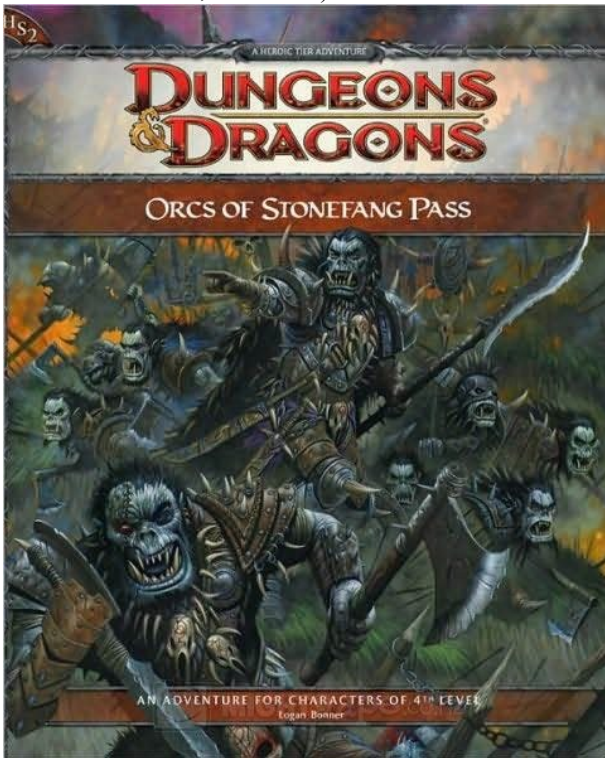


Image 8

It is important to note the multiple layers of connotation in the passage above. Not only are the orcs portrayed as hypersexual and with stronger sex drives than any other race, they are, through euphemisms, portrayed as serial rapists whose divine motivation (as received from their goddess) is to “procreate” as much possible with other races. This echoes the concept of hypersexual nature – and carries echoes of how stereotypes of immigrants often are constructed in racist discourse in today’s world. Furthermore, it should be noted that when an orc procreates with a non-orc

humanoid, the offspring is treated as an orc or half-orc, again carrying echoes of the treatment of people of color whose parentage includes Caucasian blood in both history⁶³ and in the modern day world. That is, the offspring of an abjectified person and a non-abjectified person is treated as an abject and as part of the abjectified parent’s heritage. And when orcs reproduce with even more abjectified creatures, the children are categorized according to their more abjectified parent: “When an orc produces young with an ogre, the child is a half-ogre of intimidating strength and brutish features called an ogrillon”⁶⁴ (5th edition *Monster Manual*, 2014: 245).

⁶³ Historically, children of slaves have often been categorized by their slave parent instead of non-slave parent. This has been typical regardless of whether the parents share the same racialized category or not. The same has often held true in non-slave environments, based on the differences of social status between the parents (i.e. gentry and servants, land owners and tenants, etc.).

⁶⁴ Ogrillons originated as half-orc, half-ogre hybrids in the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Fiend Folio* 1st ed (1981).

4.1.3 Humanization of the Orcs

The modern orcish irrealis, especially its visual imagery (even if various hyperdiegeses have understandably kept their own special imagery) was solidified in mutually inconsistent trends that nonetheless influenced each other across the boundaries of their representation of the orcish irrealis. Perhaps the culturally most pervasive development was Peter Jackson's immensely popular film versions (2001–2003) of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* books. They presented various versions of orcs to millions of viewers and brought the irrealis outside the literary fantasy and gaming semiospheres to mainstream cultural semiospheres around the world. Jackson's orcs were visually mixed and adapted many of Tolkien's tropes, including racially loaded imagery for the half-breed Uruk-hai that used all the tribal imagery of the colonial era. Most of Jackson's orcs are, as in Tolkien's original texts, dark-skinned, animalistic, mentally undeveloped but adept in low cunning, and have problems with normal speech. It should be noted that Jackson's versions of orcs (and goblins) have become much more heterogeneous in the film version of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (2012), which includes orcs and goblins of widely varying skin colors, physical appearances, and eloquence. Although Jackson's versions provide glimpses of orc societies, orcs still represent the societies of the abject. They exist only to torment the "good" characters, and have no culture, society, or agriculture or animal husbandry of any kind.

Another, perhaps more interesting trend of visual imagery and possibly the most important cultural changes arrived in the form of *Warcraft* (not to be confused with the *Warhammer* franchise) video games (1994–) and especially *World of Warcraft* (2004–), a massive multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG) that currently has almost 7 million players monthly with a peak of over 12 million concurrent players, and with an estimate of 70–150 million individual players having played the game at some point.

Warcraft 1 introduced orcs in the vein of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*: mindless, demon driven green brutes who enjoyed few things as much as fighting. However, the players play one campaign as orcs and the other as humans, with the two sides of the conflict being equal in all aspects, bringing shades of non-abjection into the irrealis. While the orcs are still pure antagonists, they are antagonists controlled by the player,⁶⁵ reveling in the taboo sides of abjection from necromantic or diabolic magics to villainous presentation, slaughter, and pillage. The second game continued in the same vein, with players controlling the orcs' campaign of conquest. However, by the third *Warcraft* game, the series became part of a greater trend: that of *humanization of the monstrous other* in popular fiction. The trend is not new as such for monstrous creatures – vampires, for examples, have been turned into point-of-view or at least active subject characters for decades, for example in Anne Rice's popular *Vampire Chronicles* (starting with *Interview with the Vampire* in 1976) and Charlaine Harris' *Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001–

⁶⁵ This reflects their role in the *Warhammer* miniature games.

2013) novel series,⁶⁶ as well as numerous television series such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003).

However, humanizing fairy tale and fantasy creatures into popular, positive point-of-view versions of their formerly monstrous others is a more recent phenomenon. The movement was popularized in mainstream media by the animated film *Shrek* (2001, based on the picture book *Shrek!* by William Steig in 1990), a fairy tale parody starring a humanized ogre. In the beginning, the trend included novels and short stories told from the perspectives of former fairy tale antagonists such as the Wicked Witch of the West from L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Cinderella's evil stepsister, and Snow White's stepmother, presented in by Gregory Maguire's *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995), *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* (1999), *Mirror, Mirror* (2003), and Neil Gaiman's *Snow, Glass, Apples* (1994).

For orcs, while being point-of-view characters in the sense of being playable in *Warhammer* and *Warcraft* games, their humanizing agency arrived quite late in the form of *Warcraft 3* (2002), in which orcs are seen as refugees fleeing their violent past, trying to survive in a hostile world – and helping others do the same. Story-wise, the orcs have lost the last war and been sent to internment camps, where they wallowed in lethargy until a young orc hero – an orcish Moses (see Image 9) played by the player – frees them and shows them that there are other ways to live than war. As they strive



Image 9

to create a new homeland for themselves on an empty continent, the orcs help other persecuted monster minorities do the same, becoming a kind of anti-bullying army helping the weakest. The link to postcolonial reading of African-Americans striving to establish a cultural coding in the post-slavery society is evident, as Scott (2010: 4) notes:

In this context, the object describes a kind of lowering historical cloud, a judgment animating arguments and rhetoric in both currents in which the history of peoples in the African diaspora – having been conquered and enslaved and then, post-Emancipation, being dominated by the colonial powers or by homegrown white supremacists – is a history of humiliating defeat, a useless history which must be in some way overturned or overcome. To this way of

⁶⁶ The series starts with *Dead Until Dark* (2001).

seeing, the past is an obstacle to imagining and building an empowered political position capable of effective liberation politics.

In *World of Warcraft* (2004–), the ambivalence is strengthened. Orcs and humans still form two sides with their allies, but the morals of both sides are questioned, and orcs are given stories of spiritual growth and learning. Instead of forgetting the savage side of the orcs, it is explored, thus creating a new view of what it is to be an orc, and how the orcish culture works. The description for orcs in the character creation screen of *World of Warcraft* underlines the changes in the perception of orcs:

The orc race originated on the planet Draenor. A peaceful people with shamanistic beliefs, they were enslaved by the Burning Legion and forced into war with the humans of Azeroth. Although it took many years, the orcs finally escaped the demons' corruption and won their freedom. To this day they fight for honor in an alien world that hates and reviles them. (In-game text, *World of Warcraft*, 2004)

As can be seen in the excerpt, the traditional Tolkienesque attributes are still present in the description of the orcs as slave warriors for a powerful demonic force. However, the major shift is in looking beyond the warrior slave status: the orcs are described as having gone past their purely abject status and taking their post-demonic fate into their own hands, thus making them active subjects in their own stories. Even more importantly, the *Warcraft* games make a strong contribution to the evolution of the orcs as an irrealis, by finally presenting them with action unrelated to Kristevan abjects or Greimasian opponents for humans. Furthermore, *Warcraft I* marked the first time orcs are given agriculture in non-comedic terms (in the form of animal husbandry).

I must note that not all scholars share as positive a reading as presented above, and that the optimism of my reading is based mainly on the evolution of the specific irrealis. For me, then, the irrealis is now more advanced and nuanced than in its earlier versions and thus actively resists earlier readings. However, viewed as a single text out of the semiospheric evolutionary paths of its irrealis, the colonial descriptions used in *World of Warcraft* can be seen as rather problematic. For example, Langer (2011: 105) notes that *World of Warcraft* is “a tricky, complex construction of cultural meaning in this way: it can be read as both racist and anti-racist at the same time.” While the game actively subverts some of the descriptions, it emphasizes the subversion of some traits by retaining other traits. The Other of the game never completely becomes “us,” even when their culture is explored and some of their traits are given positive values. While the abject is removed, the Other remains. As Langer (2011: 90) notes,

If in-game races are closely identified with real world races, and those same in-game races are treated more as biologically distinct species than as socially categorized races, then the implication is that real world race is also primarily biologically determined – an

outdated and destructive implication that belongs to a racist discourse.

Langer's argument on using racialized signifiers in *World of Warcraft* raises serious problems for the trend of humanizing the irrealis based on colonized Others. First, by presenting fantastic races that partially mirror perceptions of actual cultures, the developers of the game "assert a colonial power over the cultures themselves: they go on to construct the identities of those cultures in the same way that Western colonizing powers did" (Langer 2011: 103). Even though this statement is made primarily on other irrealia in *World of Warcraft*, it may also apply to orcs in the game. Second, as the game has "humans" as a playable race, and cultural settings other than European medieval sword and sorcery are portrayed through the other races, the game implicitly "suggests that those players who have Jamaican accents, for instance, are 'humanoid' – but specifically *not* human" (Langer 2011: 90). This problem in humanizing the racialized other is inbuilt in the setting through irrealia based on portrayals of actual cultures. In any fantastic setting, only characters portrayed as nonhuman can be humanized – and if a setting excludes "humans" as a specific group, no matter how the other is humanized, it remains nonhuman. As Langer (2011: 104) notes, in an interactive medium, a text is inherently unstable, and the "instability is therefore a source both of racism and of potential anti-racist resistance."

This instability is especially evident in the expansion *Warlords of Draenor* (2014), which presents the players with villains in the vein of the original concept of orcs: dark-skinned, tribal, and savage as in any colonial literature. This racialized description is not questioned but rather emphasized by the player characters fighting alongside the "good" green-skinned orcs against the evil, brown-skinned ones, bringing the development of the irrealis partially back to its starting point. The problematic nature of the description is emphasized as the starting location of the expansion is pointedly jungle-like, with an architecture of thatched huts and tribes of roaming savage orcs. Even though the frame story is about the players fending off an invasion, the only real invasion comes as the "good" side enters the orcs' homeworld and (in one of the starting missions) burns down their homes in the jungle.

Even though I agree with Langer that the treatment of races in *World of Warcraft* is highly problematic, I disagree with some of her conclusions. Langer's starting point is the text in itself, drawing on the portrayals of the fantasy races as depicted in the game. From that reading, it is obvious that many – if not all – of the "monstrous" races are portrayed through otherness and abjection: orcs in the veins of colonial blackness, goblins (as discussed below) through a blend of racialized stereotypes used of Jews, trolls as Jamaicans, and the Minotaur-like tauren through Native American imagery.⁶⁷ On the contrary, I would argue that for the *orc* irrealis in the semiosphere of fantasy, even with all of its limitations and shortcomings, the *Warcraft* games present a

⁶⁷ As a more detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this study, I recommend Langer's *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (2011) for anyone interested in race in *World of Warcraft*.

significant step in the humanization of the irrealis of orcs. In my view, it would have been impossible to humanize the irrealis without including some parts of the original irrealis with it, as the result would have been a new irrealis, not an evolution of the old. That is, the evolution of a concept requires that at least some features of the original irrealis are maintained so as to enable the evolution of the other parts.

The same trend – and problems – of humanizing orcs has been popular in other works as well: Stan Nicholls’s *Orcs: First Blood* trilogy⁶⁸ has orcs as the point-of-view characters performing an epic quest while serving an evil empress in a sort of slavery, trying to win their freedom and reach a promised land, a paradise of orcs away from humans and their wars. As seen in the paratextual visualization of the irrealis (see Image 10), the orcs in Nicholls’s text are shown as monstrous humanoids without the typically dark skin, with vaguely reptilian features (the character on the front left side of the cover is not an orc but a dwarf). To be sure, they are portrayed with some signifiers of tribalism, including savage poses and expressions, drawn unadorned weaponry, and primitive, mismatched armor. The wilderness setting is typical imagery signifying barbarian characters. The male orcs have interchangeable unindividualized facial features, and the

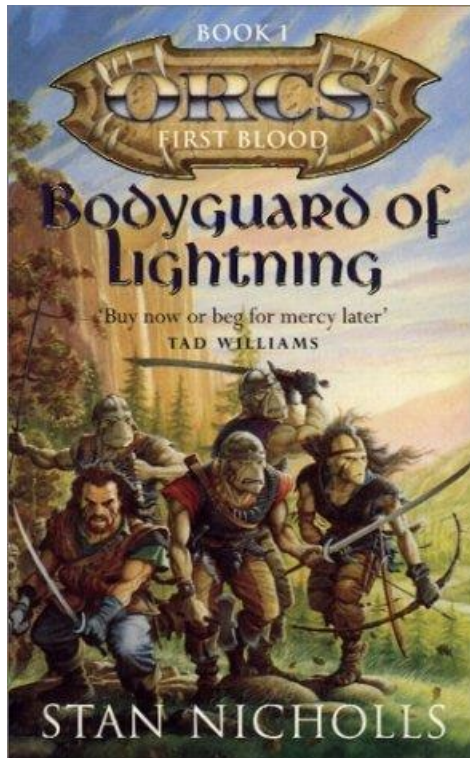


Image 10

only individually distinguishable orc is Coilla, the single female orc protagonist in the series. The textual description of the orcs deviates in part from the visualized book cover paratext. The main protagonist, an orc named Stryke, is described within the text: “Mobbs regarded the orc’s massive chest, imposing shoulders, muscular arms and proudly thrusting jaw” (Nicholls 2004: 120). While Nicholls’s (2004: 5) orcs do not have a specified skin color, they are contrasted with humans: “And now two more of the loathsome, soft pink creatures were moving in on him with murder in their eyes.”

Nicholls’s text is one of the first to introduce the trope of orcs as a scattered people looking for a homeland in which they can, if not be at peace with the world, at least live in freedom: “Even though we’re not part of the horde any more, we’re still orcs and we’re still part of the orc nation, scattered and reviled as that might be” (Nicholls 2004: 411).

⁶⁸ The series starts with *Orcs: Bodyguard of Lightning* (1999).

The trope, as introduced by Nicholls in 1999–2000 in the *Orcs* trilogy, was an instrumental part of the evolution of the orc irrealis in *Warcraft 3* (2002) and *World of Warcraft* (2004) video games and later portrayal of orcs in other media. In Nicholls’ novels, the glimpses of their future homeland are given to Stryke, the main orc protagonist, in dreamlike sequences that are written to seem like prophetic revelations on the nature of orcs. In fact, they provide the first influential trope on what I would call the “orcish



Image 11

messiah,” again utilized a few years later by the game developer Blizzard in the portrayal of Thrall, the main orcish protagonist in *Warcraft 3* and *World of Warcraft*.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ The same theme is continued in the film *Warcraft: The Beginning* (2016), but since the film does not expand the theme or illustrate new aspects to the irrealis, I will not discuss it further.

Mary Gentle, on the other hand, satirizes fantastic fiction in the novel *Grunts!* (1992), which stars orcs that acquire the minds of US marines in the Vietnam War and turns the orcs into savage bloodthirsty beasts. The paratextual visualization of orcs in *Grunts!* (see Image 11) plays heavily on army tropes: the cover image is a direct parody of Joe Rosenthal's famous photograph *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* (1945, see Image 12) taken during World War II. The orcish skin colors are used to parody the presentation of army personnel in war films, with a single dark orc, while the rest are represented with more or less Caucasian skin colors. The tie to punk rock aesthetics used with orcs in other settings such as *Shadowrun* and *World of Warcraft* are established through the single female orc's Mohawk haircut.

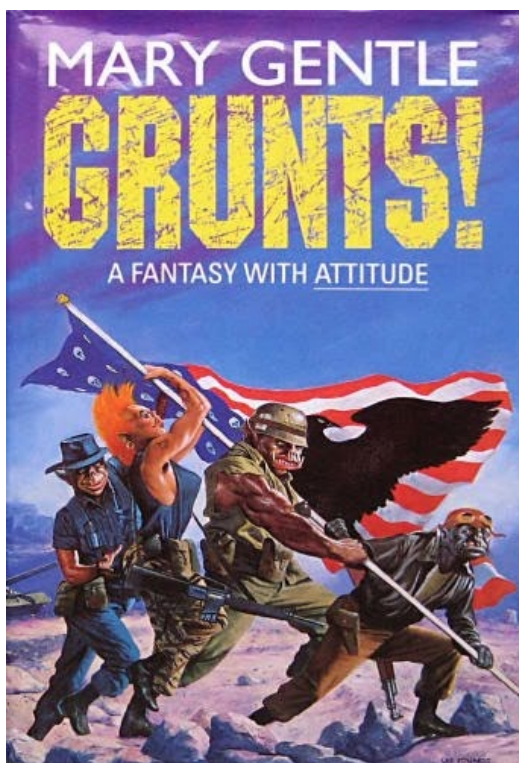


Image 12

Moreover, various roleplaying games such as *Earthdawn* (1993–2012) and *Shadowrun* (1989–2013), and popular computer games such as *The Elder Scrolls* series,⁷⁰ have included orcs as a playable character race. In these games, orc characters tend to be portrayed as stronger and more simple-minded versions of humans, with their feral pride retained but no longer in focus. In most aspects, orc characters are handled and played just the way characters of all the other fantasy races are, with their savagery integrated into their character. In these settings, rather than alluding to the colonial image of “low and bestial brutishness,” the savagery can be seen to fit the classical – and similarly colonial – image of the noble savage combined with Robert E. Howard’s concept of civilization as a passing phase, a glitch in nature that will ultimately be corrected by nature. In *Beyond the Black River* (1935), one of the most critically acclaimed short stories by Howard (1935: n.p.), a character states:

“Barbarism is the natural state of mankind,” the borderer said, still staring somberly at the Cimmerian. “Civilization is unnatural. It is a

⁷⁰ The series starts with *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* (1993) and contains games such as the immensely popular *The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim* (2011) and a massive multiplayer online roleplaying game *The Elder Scrolls Online* (2014).

whim of circumstance. And barbarism must always ultimately triumph.”

Similarly, orcs are introduced in the computer game *Elder Scrolls Online*:

Though other races often regard the Orcs as barbarians and even beasts, these noble warriors have an ancient culture forged from endless warfare in their harsh mountain homelands. Orcs live under a simple code of honor by which the strong survive and the strongest rule. (In-game text, 2014)

Nicholls’s *Bodyguard of Lightning* (1999) uses the same development: “‘Orcs are born to war,’ Stryke replied [...] ‘But it must be just. Destruction for its own sake holds no appeal to us’” (Nicholls 2004: 194). Later in the same novel, Stryke notes that “‘We *need* a foe. It’s what we do. It is in our blood’” (Nicholls 2004: 349). Likewise, in the fifth edition of the role-playing game *Shadowrun* (2013), the orcish⁷¹ irrealis, as well as the stereotypes humans have of orcs, are brought into the modern world – or, rather, a magical cyberpunk setting that mirrors the real world:

Orks (Homo sapiens robustus) look like the creatures that have been dying by the score in fantasy films and trideos for almost one hundred fifty years. With protruding brows, prominent tusks, and a large stature, orks have trouble avoiding the stereotype of being unthinkingly violent brutes. (*Shadowrun* 2013: 50)

In the role-playing game *Earthdawn* (2001: 33), *Shadowrun*’s sister game set in the same hyperdiegesis but in a different time frame, orcs⁷² are treated similarly: their “common skin colors include olive green, beige, pinkish-white, tan, and ebony.” What is more, they are described as muscular and taller than humans, with their lower canines being their most notable feature, thus combining all typical aspects of physical descriptions in the orc irrealis. Their savagery is once again explained from the point of view of the stereotypical irrealis: “The ork’s reputation for violence grows from his passionate nature. You may say your heart is full of love, or full of spite. When you say this, you are speaking poetry. When an ork says it, he means it” (*Earthdawn* 2001: 33).

Another notable text, Terry Pratchett’s *Unseen Academicals* (2009), discusses orcs as victims of extreme racism, the losers in worlds in which the victors write the history – the opposite of the earlier presentation before the humanization process started with orcs. In Pratchett’s (2009: 376) novel, the stereotypical description of an orc is propaganda written by the victors to become history, which subsequent generations of both those who

⁷¹ Or ‘orkish’ in the *Shadowrun* setting, alluding to *Warhammer*’s spelling of the orc irrealis by replacing the ‘c’ with a ‘k.’

⁷² Also with a ‘k’ in the *Earthdawn* setting.

won and those who have lost treat as fact. Here the orc Mr. Nutt discusses history with his romantic interest:

“We did terrible things.”

“They,” said Glenda. “They, not we, not you. And one thing I am certain is that in a war no one is going to say that the other side is made up of very nice people.”

This theme is heavily discussed in *Of Orcs and Men* (2012), a fantasy action video game portraying Orc freedom fighters combating the advance of the fascist *Empire of Man*, a satire of fantastic human kingdoms drawing on Tolkien’s Gondor, which is bent on killing and enslaving the “lesser races.” The player controls an orc and a goblin on their desperate mission to assassinate the human emperor in order to gain some hope for the downtrodden monster races.

In *Of Orcs and Men*, the physicality of the irrealis is emphasized (see Image 13). The irrealis retains the green skin of the *Warhammer* and *Warcraft* settings, and the muscularity of the protagonist is emphasized ad absurdum. Other visual signifiers of barbarism are present as well: near-nakedness, mismatched armor, and an emphasis on leather accessories.



Image 13

In *Of Orcs and Men*, as well as in the novels by Nicholls and Gentle, the deficiencies of orcish society that in earlier works were a symptom of the orcs’ abject status are emphasized and detailed as consequences of human persecution. This shows an aspect of

abjection in the orcs as subjects: it is hard to have agriculture – or any culture – if one’s lands have been seized, crops burnt, and villages slaughtered by the “righteous” humans. As Nicholls’s orcs say in *Warriors of the Tempest*, “‘The coming of the humans.’ ‘Aye, all our ills stem from that infernal race.’ [...] ‘The chaos can’t be held at bay forever.’ ‘None of us will be free of it until the humans are driven out’” (Nicholls 2004: 490). The back cover paratext in the omnibus edition of Nicholls’s *Orcs* trilogy (2004) plays even more heavily on this development:

There is fear and hatred in your eyes. To you I am a monster, a skulker in the shadows, a fiend sent to scare your children with. A creature to be hunted down and slaughtered like a beast in the fields. It is time you pay heed to the beast. And see the beast in yourself. I have your fear. But I have earned your respect. Hear my story. Feel the flow of my blood and be thankful. Thankful it was me, not you, who bore the sword. Thankful to the orcs; born to fight, destined to win peace for all.

Scott (2010: 4) asks: “If we are radicalized (in part) through domination and abjection and humiliation, is there anything of value or to be learned from the experience of being defeated, humiliated, abjected?” As is evident in the descriptions above, as well as in the *WarCraft* games since *WarCraft 3*, the newer texts try to answer Scott’s question by explicitly portraying orcs as victims of the views of the others, and exploring the fantastic settings through the eyes of the abjectified. Gentle’s and Nicholls’s novels, the later *WarCraft* games, Pratchett’s novel, and the computer game *Of Orcs and Men* collectively explore the abjection from the abject’s standpoint, thus presenting an experience of being an abject in a dominant society.

One curious side effect of this development of postcolonial deconstruction of the unrealis has been the discussion of what it means to be an orc in worlds with job markets full of “normalized” humans, beautiful elves, and other fantastic races that are generally considered morally “good.” For example, in the setting of the *Shadowrun* roleplaying



Image 14

game set in a fantastic version of the cyberpunk genre, racism stops orcs from competing in society on the top levels, doomed mainly to lower middle-class jobs at best. However, the latest edition (2013) goes against this: “Despite the stereotypes, orks can be found in all walks of life, from dank alleys to corporate boardrooms” (*Shadowrun* 2013: 50). Similarly, in the *Elder Scrolls Online* massive multiplayer online game (see Image 14), the player character receives a quest to prove whether an orc was fired from a menial job because of racism.

Still another instance is Pratchett’s *Unseen Academicals*, where orcs are forced into hiding and menial labor within the mainly human society due to fears of racist attacks on them if they are discovered. This forces them not to form solid contact with others: “You have been very kind, but I can see that being an orc will follow me around. There will be trouble” (Pratchett 2009: 400). Finally, in *Of Orcs and Men*, the conquered orcs are assimilated into human society as slaves, or at best as mercenaries and bodyguards fit only for physical labor. A similar motif is to be found in Nicholls’s *Orcs* trilogy, in which orc mercenaries are sold to parodically malignant dark lords as slave warriors to cover the debts of the subjugated orc nations. At times, the allusion is handled rather heavily-handedly, such as in the film *Bright* (2017), in which fantasy races live in the modern-day world, and the first orcish police officer in the US faces discrimination and mistrust due to his racial background.

A related topic is the portrayal of gender in the orcs at the point of their humanization. For instance, the sexualization of female orcs in orc visualizations has been discussed, as in their portrayal in *World of Warcraft*, in which the female version of the irrealis echoes the modes of discourse on women of color in colonial literature:

[Orc women are] particular targets of racist discourse, though this is perhaps less tied to real world racism. They [...] are considered both unattractive and hypersexualized – their ‘dance’ resembles nothing so much as a particularly bawdy strip show. These elements put Orc women in the subaltern position – in terms of both gender *and* race – that has historically been imposed on women who have not conformed to feminine social norms, and women of color. (Langer 2011: 93)

Even though I agree with Langer that the reading of orc females is seldom neutral, I have to disagree with her reading of them as being placed in a subaltern position in contrast to male orcs. In fact, in the players’ choice of their characters, one of the major points in the game (and most massive online games) is the possibility of choosing the character’s race and gender more or less freely. Thus, the player character has the same possibilities for solving quests, advancing their characters, and – quite often – saving the world, regardless of their chosen race or gender.

However, Langer’s reading is supported by the composition of non-player characters in the game. Notable orc females are rare, and they are mostly (though exceptions exist) presented as caregivers or minor villains with subaltern positions in the

narrative. As a pronounced example, in the expansion *Warlords of Draenor* (2014), out of the seven (or eight) orcish main antagonists, not one is female. In the expansion, only rare minor antagonists and some supporting orcish characters are portrayed as female.

Although Langer's claim of hypersexualization carries weight, comparing gender imagery of orcs⁷³ shows that the female characters have been made more attractive to human players compared to their male versions. As displayed in screenshots of player characters (see Image 15) from *World of Warcraft*,⁷⁴ female orcs (top row) are visualized as having more human proportions (and a good posture) compared to the exaggerated muscularity, stooped posture, and emphasized jawlines and tusks of the male orcs (bottom row). Hence, my interpretation on their visualization is partially the opposite of Langer's: I see them as further "humanized" versions of their male counterparts, their humanity



Image 15

⁷³ The same process seems to apply to other "monster" races both in *World of Warcraft* and in other games and franchises, but this must be left outside the scope of this study.

⁷⁴ All character portraits in *Image 15* have been captured from the openly accessible *World of Warcraft* *Armory* provided by Blizzard, the developer of the game. The images were captured after the character model update in *The Warlords of Draenor* (2014) expansion pack.

negotiated further by them inhabiting “‘the right kind’ of body” required for humanization (see Koistinen 2015: 50–51).

A similar phenomenon seems to be evident in other media products that portray orc females: their looks seem more “humanized” than their male counterparts. That is, they adhere to human aesthetics instead of the aesthetics of the abject, and their otherness is constructed through fewer signifiers of monstrous otherness. In Nicholls’s *Orcs* (2004: 695), the single female protagonist, Coilla, is described as “craggy, her slightly mottled hide looked healthy enough and she was pleasantly muscular [...]. There was no denying she was a handsome orc.” She is, then, a somewhat less caricaturized and more humanized version of the male protagonist’s “massive chest, imposing shoulders, muscular arms and proudly thrusting jaw” (Nicholls 2004: 120).

Similarly, on the book cover of the roleplaying game *Shadowrun*⁷⁵ (see Image 16), the signifiers of the colonial Other are present, but in a subtler form. The tusks and wild hair with “tribal” signifiers such as feathers in the hair are still there, as is the threat of violence, but they are present in a less evident form than typically associated with male orcs, effectively replaced by sexually attractive elements of tribalism.

The in-book visualizations of the fifth edition of *Shadowrun* (2013) corresponds with the treatment of female orcs (see Image 17) in their humanization in comparison to male orcs – as well as with the hypersexualization discussed above. Again, the muscularity of the male orc is slightly exaggerated, while the anatomy of the female orc is closer to human features. The male orc’s mouth and tusks are emphasized, while the female orc’s tusks are slightly smaller and her mouth is almost



Image 16

⁷⁵ Third edition German translation and cover, 2009. *Shadowrun* is set in a magical version of the cyberpunk genre, incorporating fantasy elements and magic along with cyberpunk tropes.

human. Once again, punk rock and cyberpunk aesthetics are emphasized in both hairdo and clothing.⁷⁶



Image 17

Disregarding the aesthetic choices in the visualizations of orcs, one intriguing textual phenomenon regarding the handling of the irrealis in post-Tolkien settings (not including the *Warhammer* settings in which orcs have no gender) is their gender equality. In tabletop games such as *Shadowrun*, *Earthdawn*, and video games such as *The Elder Scrolls Series* and *World of Warcraft*, female orcs – as well as other races – have equal numeral characteristics as males of their race,⁷⁷ and they have all the same options in terms of skills, education, and vocation. While this phenomenon may have something to do with the interactivity of the gaming arts and the players wanting to create characters with minimal restrictions, the phenomenon was present already in Nicholl's *Orcs* (1999–2000). In particular, the short story *The Taking* (2000) shows the female protagonist Coilla

⁷⁶ However, in the cyberpunk setting of *Shadowrun*, punk aesthetics are emphasized for all groups.

⁷⁷ Many roleplaying games portray the characters through numeric values of statistics such as strength, perception, and charisma. It is still common for the fantastic races to have race specific modifiers assigned to such statistics.

joining the main orc protagonist Stryke's warband as an equal member with no reference to or discussion about her gender, thus showing that female orcs are treated as equal members in the military organization.⁷⁸

It has to be noted that even the flagships of the traditional portrayal of the orc irrealis have at least to some extent shifted their stance. For example, after multiple novels concentrating on the wanton slaughter of orcs such as *The Thousand Orcs* (2002), in which the dark elf protagonist Drizzt Do'Urden⁷⁹ slaughters orcs as wantonly as any of Tolkien's heroes, Wizards of the Coast has tried to follow the trend of humanizing the irrealis in works such as *The Orc King* (2007), which brings the concept of orcs in *World of Warcraft* as an oppressed race in search of a homeland to their *Forgotten Realms* fantasy setting, even as Wizards of the Coast's game line continues to abjectify orcs.

4.1.4 Concluding Remarks

As the examples above have shown, while orcs started as a unified irrealis in Tolkienesque fantasy and later in *Dungeons & Dragons*, they quickly branched out to form various mutually non-inclusive versions of the irrealis (see Figure 14), ranging from the abject or monstrous other to misunderstood heroes and victims of racial hatred. Even within the basic cultural semiosphere of fantasy, disregarding specific subgenres, the interpretations of what the contents of the concept orc include vary wildly, both in their appearance and descriptions as well as in their allusive roots. However, as displayed above, the otherness of orcs has gradually been understood and brought into the spotlight as a positive quality of a subject, as also evidenced by treatments such as *Tusks* (2015), a gay orc dating simulator.

Although the process of semiospheric containment has retained some allusive and metaphorical content as well as visual imagery that would in any other genre have been deemed extremely racist, the evolution of orcs clearly shows that semiospheric containment is not impenetrable. In other words, even fantastic concepts change and evolve with time, and signifiers that have endured since the irrealis were created are slowly changing or being replaced. By breaking down the irrealis into its four elements as discussed above, we can view the differences in the irrealis as portrayed in Tolkien's texts (plus TSR and its successor Wizards of the Coast), the *Warhammer* franchise, and the *Warcraft* (plus the game and literature lines discussed above). This division is illustrated in Figure 14:⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Even so, lack of representation is displayed here, as Coilla still remains the only female orc in the unit.

⁷⁹ First introduced in R.A. Salvatore's *The Crystal Shard* (1988), since then appearing to date in twenty-six novels, a dozen short stories, as well as comic books, video games, and roleplaying games.

⁸⁰ Abbreviations in Figure 14: TSR = TSR Inc. WotC = Wizards of the Coast. WHFB = *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. WH40K = *Warhammer 40.000*.

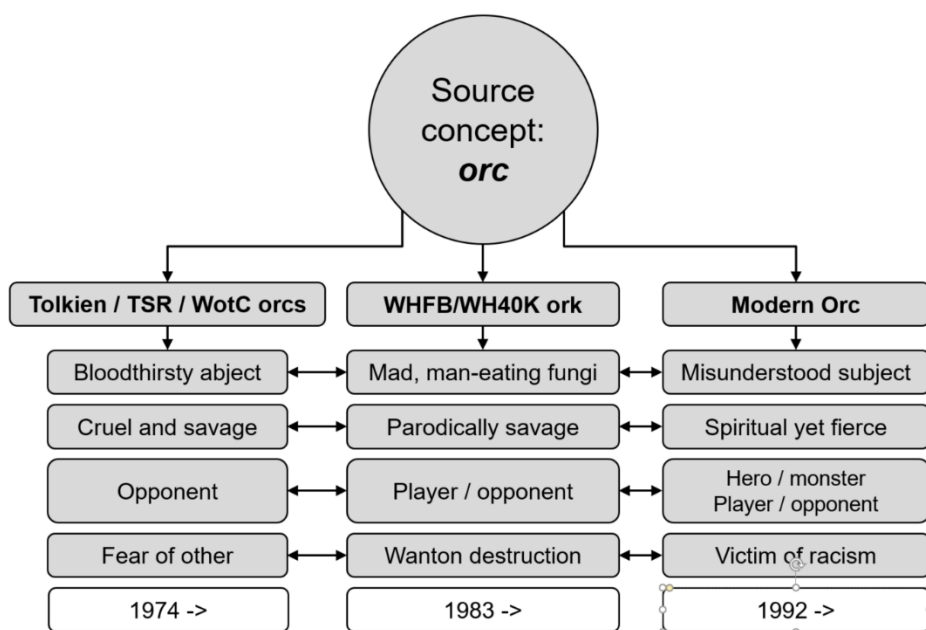


Figure 14 – Different interpretations of the orc irrealis

Thus, although the orcish irrealis has developed into multiple different hyperdiegesis specific irrealia, they overlap even in their critical functions, with different versions acquiring elements from the other versions of the irrealis. For example, while the *Dungeons & Dragons* game line by Wizards of the Coast has retained the traditional imagery of Tolkien's orcs, recent examples of the book line have selectively replaced "fear of the other" with "victim of the fear of the other." Also, as the expansion *Warlords of Draenor* (Blizzard 2014) to *World of Warcraft* shows, the same hyperdiegesis can simultaneously contain two conflicting versions of the same irrealis.

It can be claimed that due to Jackson's film adaptations, the most commonly understood version of the orc irrealis today is still that of Tolkien's evil monsters with racially motivated traits. Yet, in games and literature, a humanized and identifiable version has become part of the irrealis for the tens of millions who have encountered orcs as multifaceted and multidimensional individuals that can act as point-of-view and playable characters, not as mere monstrous hordes of abjects. While Tolkien's view of the world led to the creation of orcs as an abject slave race forming the gleefully evil armies of an evil empire, it seems that Western society's focus on individualism and hero tales of individual success has given the basis for the development of orcish subjects capable of heroism and courage. And thus it has given orcs societies that reflect cultural values other than those of being an abject or an opponent.

4.2 Goblins, Gnomes, and Dwarves as Irrealia

In direct contrast to the evolution of orcs stands another group of irrealia: that of goblins, gnomes, and dwarves. As noted in the introduction, greedy merchants or banker races in fantasy or science fiction, such as the banker goblins of *Harry Potter* or the Ferengi of *Star Trek*, often resemble the antisemitic portrayal of Jews in earlier mainstream fiction and culture. As we shall see, this development has been gradual, and its points of origin are far earlier than the birth of the genres of the fantastic. The development dates back to the Middle Ages, from the early linkage of Jews to Blood Libel tales and folk tales that linked Jewishness to negative magical qualities. As the genres of the fantastic have matured, the references that were originally racial archetypes have become self-referential. Greedy merchant races in fantasy and science fiction have retained the stereotypical cultural and physical features that were used in folklore, fiction, and propaganda for antisemitic purposes. Even in the last three decades, fictional merchants and bankers have shared visual imagery that contains antisemitic characteristics with overstated physical features much like those on propaganda posters, through the exaggeration inherent in fantasy.

Unlike orcs, the partially overlapping goblin, gnome, and dwarf irrealia do not have a single point of creation. Rather, they have evolved through folklore blending with antisemitic stereotyping, especially in the early twentieth century and around World War II. Whereas orcs have been deconstructed through postcolonial critique, goblins and gnomes have not only retained their original racially motivated roots but developed them even further. This development has at times occurred in the same texts in which the evolution of the orc irrealis has been evident. In this section, then, I discuss the non-evolution of the goblin and gnome irrealia, contrasting it with the overlapping contrary development of the dwarf irrealis.

Let me note that I must limit the discussion of pre-World War II history of the links between the clearly supernatural irrealia of the folk tales and the antisemitic portrayal of Jews in Europe to the examples below, as a detailed account does not fit the scope of this study. However, the links between antisemitism and folk tales ever since the Middle Ages are obvious, and the blending of the antisemitic portrayals of Jewishness and the fantastic irrealia of the fairy tales cannot be ignored. I will not go into contemporary examples of explicit antisemitism in this study, as my focus is on fantastic irrealia with antisemitic implications.

The history of antisemitism in European folklore is well documented,⁸¹ with extensive studies painting a grim picture of how antisemitism has been present and well integrated into European folk tales from the Middle Ages. No current research shows a clear origin in folklore as to the forging of antisemitic links between the Jewish people and fairy tale creatures such as gnomes and goblins. However, several common thematic uses, stereotypes, and tropes can be shown to have been commonly employed about ethnic

⁸¹ See e.g. Dundes 1991, Langmuir 1996, Wistrich 1999 & 2010, and Yuval 2006.

minorities in Europe. Similarly, the use of Jewish people as antagonists in fairy tales has been well documented.⁸²

The use of Jewish people as antagonists in European folklore and folk tales dates back to medieval times. In medieval European folklore, the most common trope employed with Jews in folk tales is “stealing children”, a trope that reached its height in the Blood Libel scare of the thirteenth century. In many ways, the Blood Libel story (analyzed in e.g. Dundes 1991 and Johnson 2012) has been a version of the age-old “a minority or a fairy tale creature stole a child” tale also commonly told about the Roma minorities in Europe even today (see Nord 2008 for a thorough study on the subject). The best known case of the story – typically seen as the origin of the Blood Libel tales against Jews – is the monk Thomas of Monmouth’s *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich* (1150), an account of the kidnapping and ritual murder of a boy later known as William of Norwich (Johnson 2012: 30).

Monmouth’s tale drew on tales of ethnic minorities kidnapping the children of the cultural majority of a cultural semiosphere can be traced far back in history, and tales of Jews kidnapping Greeks can be traced beyond the birth of Christianity. For example, Langmuir and Holmes trace the roots of the folk tale in propaganda use to the historian Poseidus, who recounts the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes in 175–164 B.C. (see Langmuir 1991: 7 and Holmes 1991: 100). However, Monmouth’s account was the first to have major political implications in Europe and was used as propaganda that contributed to the massacres of York and London in 1189–1190 and the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 by Edward I. The charges continued to be used against Jews when their readmission to England was discussed in 1657 (Johnson 2012: 50).

The Blood Libel tale has a close equivalent in fantastic fairy tales: the faerie tithe story especially common in the British Isles, in which “once every decade (or seven years) the faeries needed to pay a tithe of one child to Hell, and [...] try to evade this by stealing human children whom they send as the tithe” (Loponen 2006: 10). In both types of tales, the violence is done by a non-Christian Other to a Christian child. However, although the trope of a minority or a fairy tale creature stealing children is a common one in folktales, the Blood Libel tale has a twist from the standard telling of the trope in, for example, changeling stories (see Loponen 2006: 10). While the typical telling of the tale starts with the disappearance of a child or “switching” of the “real” child with a child of the faerie or an ethnic minority, the Blood Libel stories typically start with a murder of a child (Johnson 2012: 1–2).

The element of non-Christianity helped to overlap fictitious, antisemitic facets of Jewishness with those of fantastic folk tale creatures. For example, the links between fairy tale creatures and the devil were very commonly seen also in the folklore concerning Jews in late Medieval folklore. On the structural level, artists typically adorned Jews with

⁸² See e.g. Baum 2009 on the use of Jews in the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm.

features linking them to the devil as the devil's creatures – a direct commentary on the non-Christianity of Jews:

In the social mind, Jews were undermining agents of the devil, responsible for every catastrophe, from random crime to plague and drought. Artists portrayed Jews with horns, tails, and satanic facial features. Christian scholars often elaborated on the idea that Jews were evil creatures. (Baum and Samuels 2012: 19)

Or:

The Jew was not quite human. He was a creature of a different order, not really human—at least not in the sense that Christians were. Most significant of all, he was constantly linked with the Devil in medieval Christian writing, painting and sculpture. (Wistrich 1999: 4)

In folk tales, Jews filled a niche by representing a real, existing minority, in contrast to the fantastic folk tale creatures in fairy tales. It may be the case that people could attach the tropes from supernatural creatures to someone they would actually know existed safely outside the communities and semiospheres of majority culture. In this way, Jews existed directly in the realm of the Other, making the tropes even more powerful:

[C]himerical assertions present fantasies, figments of the imagination, monsters that, although dressed syntactically in the clothes of real humans, have never been seen and are projections of mental processes unconnected with the real people of the outgroup. (Langmuir 1996: 334)

Similarly, in the Brothers Grimm tales, Jews were a common motif, always treated derogatively and as total abjects,⁸³ as shown in tales such as *Jew in the Thorns* (in which a Jew is tortured and hung as a thief after a minor offence), *The Girl Who Was Killed by Jews* (a retelling of the Blood Libel tale), and *The Good Cloth* (in which a Jew is turned into a dog and beaten to death after a minor offence). In most of these tales, the Jews, who are typically murdered by the end of the tale, and who act basically only as Greimasian antagonists (see 2.1.6), possess or are affected by a magical element or spell, which brings them into the realm of the fantastic in the folklore. The Jewish antagonists are portrayed as being motivated solely by their greed, which is shown to be as their only reason of existence, thus linking their function closely to supernatural goblins and gnomes with their lust for gold.

Race, as many postcolonial scholars have stated, is a social construct.⁸⁴ The characteristics and stereotypes of a race are constructed within the primary cultural

⁸³ See Snyder 1978 for discussion on the Brothers Grimm fairy tales in nationalist context.

⁸⁴ See e.g. Fanon 1986, Said 1995, Cornell & Hartmann 1998, and Scott 2010.

semiospheres that the race belongs to or is affected by. In the case of antisemitic characterization of Jews, the concept of race is constructed both within the cultural semiospheres in which Jews lived and within the semiosphere of folk tales. In both cases, the construed characteristics were used to create abject features to make an ethnic minority the Other, thus creating an abject state in which violence and shunning of the minority could be seen as justified. The abjectification of Jews reached its peak in the first half of the twentieth century, with much of the earlier folklore used both in Europe and the United States, leading to horrific results in Nazi Germany. Especially the Blood Libel tales and folklore related to greed were revived for the purposes of the Nazi regime to display the “murderousness” of Jews, although the Nazi regime drew on other elements of fairy tales as well (Mieder 1982: 435–436).

The physical description of Jews in folk tales and propaganda has changed over the centuries. For example, the derogatively used portrayals of large noses appeared in European art in the eighteenth century but were unheard of earlier on (see Baum 2009: 193). Both in medieval art and the propaganda of the Nazi regime, Jews were described in terms used also of African blacks in colonial literature:

More primal and ape-like, as well as decrepit, The Jew’s body was
 “small, black, and hairy all over; his back is bent, his feet are flat; his
 eyes squint, and his lips smack; he has an evil smell, is promiscuous,
 and loves to deflower, impregnate, and infect blond girls. (Adolf
 Hitler as quoted in Baum 2009: 193)

Note the full checklist of characteristics of the Other as described by Fanon (1986: 63–64): skin color, hirsutism, bad smell, bad posture, and hypersexuality. It should be noted that these qualities of the abject have also been used for folk tale creatures throughout Europe. For example, in English fairy tales, brownies (as well as their more malicious versions, boggarts⁸⁵) were “raggedly dressed” and had “brown faces and shaggy heads” (Briggs 1976: 45).

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Nazi regime created the image of Jews as related to abjects in folklore. Although Nazi propaganda excessively used imagery related to fairy tale creatures to portray Jews in their visual imagery (see Image 18), antisemitic portrayals had used the imagery related to Jews, albeit in different forms, as creatures of folk tales since the Middle Ages. As, for instance, Wistrich (1999) notes, Jews were also portrayed as magical creatures. However, in employing fantastic folk tales for propaganda purposes, the Nazi regime created a hyper-composition of abject traits still in use in fantasy and science fiction.

⁸⁵ A malicious and unhelpful fairy, typically ugly and deformed. Boggarts were used to explain small accidents and nasty things, as well as the strange noises and creaking in the night (Loponen 2006: 7).



Image 18

All three posters displayed in Image 18 contain most of the visual signifiers used in Nazi propaganda to create the abject Other, lacking only (most likely due to portrait framing) the “pot belly” signifier, which is otherwise widely present in Nazi propaganda. In terms of the goblin, gnome, and dwarf irrealia, the elements that are presented (and survive in irrealia) include bad posture, large noses, baldness, beards (especially in the dwarf irrealis), as well as greed and malice (especially in the goblin irrealis). Here, I will focus on the following signifiers that have been used to relate to the signified of antisemitic imagery of Jews:

Physical signifiers	Cultural signifiers
Pot belly	Greedy
Small stature	Lecherous
Hirsutism (all / beards)	Malicious
Baldness	Miserly
Large noses	Immoral / lacking ethics
Protruding ears	Murderous (blood libel)
Bent back (bad posture)	Secretive (own culture / language)
Squinting eyes	Dishonest merchant / money lender
Dark skin	Morally questionable

I have excluded the signifier of bad smell, as its use of any ethnic group portrayed as the Other has been common. Similarly, I have left out the signifier of “being in league with the Devil,” as its use has all but faded in the twentieth century, and Christian mythology is not employed in any of the fantastic settings I use in my case studies. Also, the signifier of “stealing children,” though originally extremely common in antisemitic portrayals, has

at least in the last few centuries been associated with racist portrayals of other ethnic minorities (e.g. the Roma) as well. None of the signifiers in the lists above result in the signified of Jews in antisemitic portrayals as such, but semiosphere specific combinations can be used – and have been employed – in creating the abjectified signified. For example, large noses, bent back, and greed would be enough to create the signified in many texts, and other combinations have also been used to allude to the racist portrayal of Jews in texts for centuries.

Of course, any single signifier does not carry weight by itself. For example, greed by itself does not denote any cultural stereotype. Greedy characters exist in and out of any cultural stereotypes, and even when describing a fantastic race or group portrayed as greedy, the alluded cultural stereotype could range from pirates to American industrial tycoons, from gold rush pioneers to medieval nobility.

A complex signified alluding to a real world stereotype requires multiple combined signifiers. With fewer signifiers, readers may or may not make the connection, and when the number of combined signifiers is increased, the alluded stereotype becomes clearer. In a sense, the process functions through the principle of minimal departure (Ryan 1991: 48–60). As readers populate a text with meaning, they start with basic assumptions of the genre, their main cultural semiosphere, and what they may know (or assume) of the text's original cultural semiosphere. They then actively take cues from the text, making *minimal departures* from their assumptions based on these. Thus, having only the signifier “greedy” in a text, a reader's interpretation may vary widely: the signifier may be an allusive reference within the fictional world, but it does not allude directly to any real world cultural stereotype. However, if the signifiers “pot belly,” “greedy,” “miserly,” and “large nose” are used in combination, readers are more likely to draw the reference from the real world cultural stereotype, and fill the remaining descriptive gaps by saturating them with the other signifiers linked to the complex sign.

In the following sections, I examine the development of racist signifiers from folk tales into the genres of fantastic fiction and discuss the development of the signifiers in the irrealia of goblins, gnomes, and dwarves. My aim is to display the differences of the development in the three irrealia based on whether the irrealia has been abjectified into the Other in their portrayals, or whether the portrayals have been neutral or positive, that is, whether the irrealia have been treated as Greimasian opponents, subjects, or helpers.

4.2.1 From Folk Tales to the Fantastic

Although there is a link between folk tales (and fairy tales) and the fantastic,⁸⁶ folk tales as such should be considered their own semiosphere with their own grammar and texts, often influencing, but not included, in the semiospheres of the fantastic. As noted above, folk tales and the fantastic have been in constant dialogue with each other, with concepts copied directly or remodelled into the semiospheres of fantasy and supernatural horror

⁸⁶ See e.g. Carpenter (2000: 100, 144, 220) for Tolkien's views on the subject.

(and to a lesser extent science fiction). However, the semiosphere of folk tales cannot as such directly translate to the semiosphere of fantasy. The tropes of folk and fairy tales are typically bound to a set of rules evolved in oral storytelling, while the tropes of contemporary fantasy are based on novels, short stories, and serializations of the early twentieth century, thus creating a different set of rules for the creation of texts in the semiosphere. Similarly, even though we can claim partial linkage between the imagery of goblins and gnomes as treated through fairy tales up to World War II, the exaggerated imagery of the Nazi regime is not the starting point for the representation of the goblin and gnome irrealia in European cultural semiospheres.

Beyond folklore and social tropes, similar descriptions of Jews were utilized in mainstream art in the European cultural semiospheres. Disregarding the portrayals of Jews in religious contexts such as church paintings and mosaics, the imagery was constant until the latter half of the twentieth century in drama and theater. For example, both the text and theater performances of Shakespeare's Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) were for a long time used as a stereotype for the greedy Jewish merchant, using physical racist imagery attributed to the stereotype to accentuate Shylock's Jewish origins. Shakespeare's version was not by any means exceptional. For example, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589) offers a complex version of a Jew as an anti-hero, with its stage versions adhering closely to antisemitic stereotypes. Similarly, the character Fagin in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839) is written as a distillation of antisemitic stereotypes,⁸⁷ as was Svengali in George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1895) as well as most of the descriptions of Jews up to the early twentieth century in most cultural semiospheres in Europe and the United States.

As Lampinen (2013: 3) notes: "it is a recognized characteristic of hostile images of other groups to be reapplied to a newly emerging salient group rather than abandoned." In early fantasy, then, when authors needed to create a stereotype for a fantastic greedy merchant or banker race, their main cultural semiospheres offered them the antisemitic description of the Jew as a money lender, while fairy tales provided creatures from folklore: gnomes, goblins, and dwarves. However, as these fairy tale creatures, especially in German and continental European folklore, had already been suffused with the antisemitic imagery of Jewishness in Nazi Germany, the creation of the antisemitic fantastic version of gnomes, goblins, and dwarves as irrealia followed easily.

⁸⁷ However, this does not apply to all of Dickens' Jewish characters: Riah in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865) is presented sympathetically as a gentle and virtuous character, even though his profession is that of a money lender.

4.2.2 Dwarves

Let me start the exploration of the three irrealia with the least complex one, as *dwarves*⁸⁸ in the fantastic (as opposed to dwarves in folklore or myths) have a clearly defined origin and a clear link to the portrayal of Jews, even though it is not necessarily intentionally antisemitic. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) introduced the dwarves of folklore and fairy tales into the fantastic. Dwarf legends (based on e.g. the *Eddas*) have been well-established in folklore through continental Europe and the British Isles, and Tolkien was by no means the first to link dwarves to riches, mountains, or mining. As noted by Sikes (1880: 29–30),

[T]he connection of the dwarfs with the mountains is equally universal. 'God,' says the preface to the Heldenbuch,⁸⁹ 'gave the dwarfs being, because the land and the mountains were altogether waste and uncultivated, and there was much store of silver and gold and precious stones and pearls still in the mountains.'

Although Tolkien connects his dwarves through their names to the Old Norse *Eddas* (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 175), he notes in his correspondence that they started as "conventional and inconsistent Grimm-dwarves." Tolkien himself described his dwarves as something new: "These dwarves are not quite the dwarfs of better known lore. They have been given Scandinavian names, it is true; but that is an editorial concession" (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 31). Tolkien's linking of the dwarves with Jews is deliberate, but rather admiring, even though one of their main characteristics is greed, a common signifier in antisemitic portrayals:

I do think of the 'Dwarves' like Jews: at once native and alien in their habitations speaking the languages of the country, but with an accent due to their own private tongue... (Tolkien, as quoted in Carpenter 2000: 229)

Even though the dwarves of Tolkien's tales are in part portrayed through antisemitic qualities, they were portrayed mainly positively, and the negative qualities were few. Tolkien's use of antisemitic qualities seems like a case of cultural stereotyping and blindness to period racism, as his criticism of antisemitism and the Nazi regime are well documented in his correspondence. For example, in a letter to his publisher, on discussing a German edition of *The Hobbit* in 1938, Tolkien states:

⁸⁸ The plural I use in this study is based on Tolkien's "incorrect" plural instead of the received *dwarfs*, as 'dwarves' has become an accepted and well used version due to Tolkien's "piece of private bad grammar, rather shocking for a linguist," as he describes it in his correspondence (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 23).

⁸⁹ *The Book of Heroes*, German epic poetry from the fifteenth to sixteenth century. Collected and edited in 1855–1867.

Personally I should be inclined to refuse to give any *Bestätigung*⁹⁰ (although it happens I can), and let the German translation go hang. In any case I should object strongly to any such declaration appearing in print. I have many Jewish friends, and should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine. (Tolkien, as quoted in Carpenter 2000: 37, emphasis original)

Tolkien's dwarves are closer in their descriptions to the dwarves of later Norse mythology,⁹¹ and their physical portrayals are kept to a minimum. Dwalin, the first dwarf whom Bilbo, the protagonist of *The Hobbit*, encounters, is described only as "a dwarf with a blue beard tucked into a golden belt, and very bright eyes under his dark-green hood" (Tolkien 1973: 18). Balin, the second dwarf, is identified only by his white beard and a scarlet hood. The next ones, Kili and Fili, by their blue hoods, silver belts, and yellow beards (Tolkien 1973: 20). It is clear that in these sequences, Tolkien remains close to his starting point of a comic tale with "Grimm-dwarves" (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 26), who function more or less like interchangeable fairy tale creatures.⁹² In the text, the dwarves acquire only a few individual characteristics, and are mainly described through two shared group motifs only, that is, greed and longing for their lost homeland – both common in the discourse on Jewishness at the time, the first in antisemitic and the latter in sympathetic portrayals. The story ends with a dying Thorin (the leader of the dwarves) regretting his earlier greed on his deathbed: "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world" (Tolkien 1973: 273).

In *The Lord of the Rings*, dwarves are typically portrayed as briefly as in *The Hobbit*, but – as in the style of the text – with more eloquence and detail in description. For example Glóin, the first dwarf encountered in *The Lord of the Rings*, who was introduced in *The Hobbit* as an interchangeable dwarf with four others and was identified only by a white hood and a silver belt, is introduced in *The Lord of the Rings* as follows:

Next to Frodo on his right sat a dwarf of important appearance, richly dressed. His beard, very long and forked, was white, nearly as white as the snow-white cloth of his garments. He wore a silver belt, and round his neck hung a chain of silver and diamonds. (Tolkien 1994: 221)

⁹⁰ Confirmation of heritage required of authors by German publishers.

⁹¹ Shortness was not an attribute attached to dwarves in earlier Norse myths, but added to the term at a later time.

⁹² The dwarves Dori, Ori, Oin, and Glóin (without the accent mark at least in my edition of *The Hobbit*) were said to have "two purple hoods, a grey hood, and a white hood [...] and gold and silver belts" (Tolkien 1973: 21) in the style of fairy tale interchangeability.

Note the lack of any physical description in the passage. Glóin's son, Gimli, one of the main protagonists of *The Lord of the Rings*, is afforded even less description, being referred to only as "There was a younger dwarf at Glóin's side: his son Gimli" (Tolkien 1994: 234). His full description in the text comes later: "Gimli the dwarf alone wore openly a short shirt of steel-rings, for dwarves make light of burdens, and in his belt was a broad-bladed axe" (Tolkien 1994: 272) – again, no physical description. Interestingly, most visual descriptives of Tolkien's dwarves come from illustrators such as Alan Lee,⁹³ whose art uses many of the signifiers described above. Only in the appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* are dwarves given more detailed descriptions, some directly linked to the stereotypes of Jews but also including other characteristics that do not connect with that stereotype:

They are a tough, thraven race for the most part, secretive, laborious, retentive of the memories of injuries (and benefits), lovers of stone, of gems, of things that take shape under the hands of craftsmen rather than things that live by their own life. But they are not evil by nature, and few have ever served the Enemy of free will, whatever the tales of Men may have alleged. For Men of old lusted after their wealth and the works of their hands, and there has been enmity between the races. (Tolkien 1994: 1106)

The last part is interesting to note (with greed associated more with humans than dwarves), especially considering Tolkien's letter comparing dwarves to Jews and how Tolkien (1994: 1106) continues to describe the dwarves in the appendix with the exact terms he linked to them "being like Jews" in his letter:

And it was according to the nature of Dwarves that, travelling and labouring and trading about the lands, they should use the languages of men among whom they dwelt. Yet in secret [...] they used their own strange tongue, changed little by the years; for it had become a tongue of lore.

It may be that the fact that Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* after World War II made his view of his earlier creations to reflect the history of antisemitism in Europe, as regards both the developments between and during World War II, and similar developments in the earlier history of Europe.⁹⁴

The same qualities survive in the unrealis throughout the semiosphere of fantasy, repeating the same cultural notions, although they have lost Tolkien's themes of exodus, lost homeland, and secret language, and instead emphasize the industriousness and warrior

⁹³ Lee later worked as a lead concept artist for Peter Jackson's film adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit*.

⁹⁴ For example, the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290, accompanied by the confiscation of all their property by the crown.

qualities of the dwarves in *The Lord of the Rings*. The lost homeland motif has been replaced⁹⁵ by glorious homelands that are either described in the texts or visualized in video games and art, and the secret language has become just one language among many. The main emphasis is on industry and crafts. In the *Warhammer Fantasy* (1986: 15) roleplaying game, “Dwarfs are expert stone-workers, and generally adept at all manner of industrial crafts, such as ironworking [...] and the manufacture of superb jewellery.” In *Gemini* (1998: 13), “They are hard and industrious, an ancient warrior kin with indomitable spirit and blades of biting steel.” In the second edition of *Earthdawn* (2001: 31), “Dwarfs are very skilled craftsmen, and most often are taught from a very young age in their home.” In game settings, their industriousness is given numeric values relevant to gameplay, as in the third edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (2000: 15), where dwarves gain a “+2 racial bonus⁹⁶ on Craft checks that are related to stone or metal: Dwarves are familiar with stonework and metalwork.” Some of these game mechanics descriptions have echoed the resemblance between dwarves and stereotypes of Jews as portrayed in folk tales and Tolkien’s texts, but they have become less evident. The third edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (2000: 15) still gave dwarves a “+2 racial bonus on Appraise checks that are related to stone or metal items: Dwarves are familiar with valuable items of all kinds,” but such bonuses were excluded in the fourth edition.

Greed is mentioned at times directly, and at times by implication. In the third edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (2000: 14), greed was still emphasized in the description: “Dwarves value gold, gems, jewelry, and art objects made with these precious materials, and they have been known to succumb to greed.” However, by the fourth edition (2008: 37), greed was only mentioned as an implied trait of the irrealis: “Warriors pray [...] even to Tiamat,⁹⁷ if a dwarf is consumed by the dwarven taste for wealth.”

The physical descriptions of the dwarf irrealis have stayed remarkably unchanged throughout its development in the semiosphere, with some variation. Baldness is often rivalled by unruly hair as a competing norm. Skin color is of varying tones (dark skin has been mainly removed as a signifier), and the height and weight of the irrealis have been given “default” values. In *Warhammer Fantasy* (1986: 15), “Dwarfs are short, burly creatures, immediately recognizable by their long hair and thick beards.” In the third edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (2000: 14), “Dwarves stand only 4 to 4½ feet tall, but they are so broad and compact that they are, on average, almost as heavy as humans. [...] Dwarves’ skin is typically deep tan or light brown, and their eyes are dark.” Similarly, in the fourth edition (2008: 37), “Dwarves average about 4½ feet in height and are very broad, weighing as much as an adult human. Dwarves have the same variety of skin, eye, and hair colors as humans. [...] Male dwarves are often bald.” It is of interest to note that

⁹⁵ While as noted in the last chapter, one interpretation of the orc irrealia has gained the same motif along with a recurring Moses-like figure.

⁹⁶ In game mechanics, in simplified terms, this bonus is added to a die roll when trying to succeed in rolling over a numeric value depending on the challenge.

⁹⁷ An evil god in the base *Dungeons & Dragons* setting.

...but they are generous to those few who earn their trust.
is value gold, gems, jewelry, and art objects made with these
materials, and they have been known to succumb to greed.
la neither recklessly nor timidly, but with a careful courage
acity. Their sense of justice is strong,
s worst it can turn into a thirst for
see. Among gnomes, who
g famously with dwarves.
sh is "If I'm lying, may
dwarves!"

Racial Description:
stand only 4 to
t tall, but they
rest and com-
t they are, on
almost as heavy
as. Dwarven men
sly taller and no
heavier than dwar-
ven. Dwarves' skin is
deep tan or light brown,
e eyes are dark. Their
usually black, gray, or
nd, worn long. Dwar-
valve their beards
d groom them very.
Dwarves favor sim-
s for their hair,
d clothes. Dwarves
end -seldom at about
d they can live to
6 years old.

Stats: Dwarves get
c with gnomes,
sly with humans,
... and halflings.
say, "The dwar-
ven are ac-
e and a friend
s hundred years."

Religion: The chi
Foglar. He is the crea-
er to work for the be

Language: Dwarves
scrip. Dwarven
ries of kingd
Dwarven all
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Dwarven
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Image 19

Even though the recent *The Hobbit* films (2012–2014) by Peter Jackson emphasize the theme of greed much as in Tolkien's novel, their portrayal of the dwarves is much closer to the current form of the irrealis of strong and sturdy warriors than to Tolkien's interchangeable Grimm-dwarves.⁹⁸ It should be noted that while Tolkien made the thirteen dwarves in *The Hobbit* as interchangeable as possible by making the difference of colors of their hoods and belts their main signifying characteristics, thus emphasizing the fairy tale nature of the characters, Jackson in his adaptation of *The Hobbit* on the contrary emphasizes the individuality of each of the dwarves through imagery earlier unrelated with the irrealis: Balin is old and venerable, Bifur has a head injury, Bombur is obese, Kili is a romantic interest to the elf Tauriel, and so on.

One interesting major feature associated with modern dwarves is a tendency to use Scottish or mock-Scottish accents in their portrayal. There is some debate on the starting point of the accent in the irrealis. One possible point is Poul Anderson's fantasy novel *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (1961), in which the dwarf Hugi spoke with a thick Scottish accent. Later, the feature appeared for example in Raymond E. Feist's *Magician* (1982), in which the dwarves had Scottish inspired names, were organized in clans, and spoke of each other as "lads." A definite turning point was *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* (1983), as the publisher Games Workshop localized racial stereotypes into British stereotypes (see the section on *Warhammer* orcs in the previous section). After the trope was utilized in the *WarCraft* games since *Warcraft 2* (1995) – especially *World of Warcraft* (2004) – and

⁹⁸ Still, Jackson retained some of the motif of dwarves as comic relief, as he did in the *Lord of the Rings* films with Gimli, in contrast with the novels.

in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Ring* films, Scottish accents have become a standard feature in the irrealis.

Much like orcs, then, dwarves have “matured” as an irrealis. However, unlike orcs, who have several competing and partially overlapping irrealia, dwarves in the main semiospheres of fantasy are a single, internally logical irrealis. This may partially result from dwarves originating in a more sympathetic position in the semiosphere in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Even though the dwarf irrealis is rooted in folk tales with unsympathetic linkage, and even though Tolkien's portrayal had facets of period racism (despite his stated intention), at the start of their evolution as an irrealis, dwarves were protagonists, not abjects like the orcs, making it possible to advance the positive elements of the irrealis.

As displayed in Figure 15, when the different stages of the irrealis are broken down to their four sub-elements, we can see that the distinct phase of evolution for the irrealis occurred between Tolkien's two texts (1937 and 1954), when the dwarves matured into the form they have in contemporary texts of the fantastic. There is much less variation between the portrayal of dwarves in contemporary fantasy than between Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. However, there is some discrepancy between the visual and textual portrayals of dwarves, even with textual imagery and visual imagery from within the same text. This applies both to modern versions of the dwarf irrealis and to Tolkien's irrealis, as some of the most popular and noteworthy of the illustrators of Tolkien's texts have included imagery not present in Tolkien's sparse descriptions of his creatures.

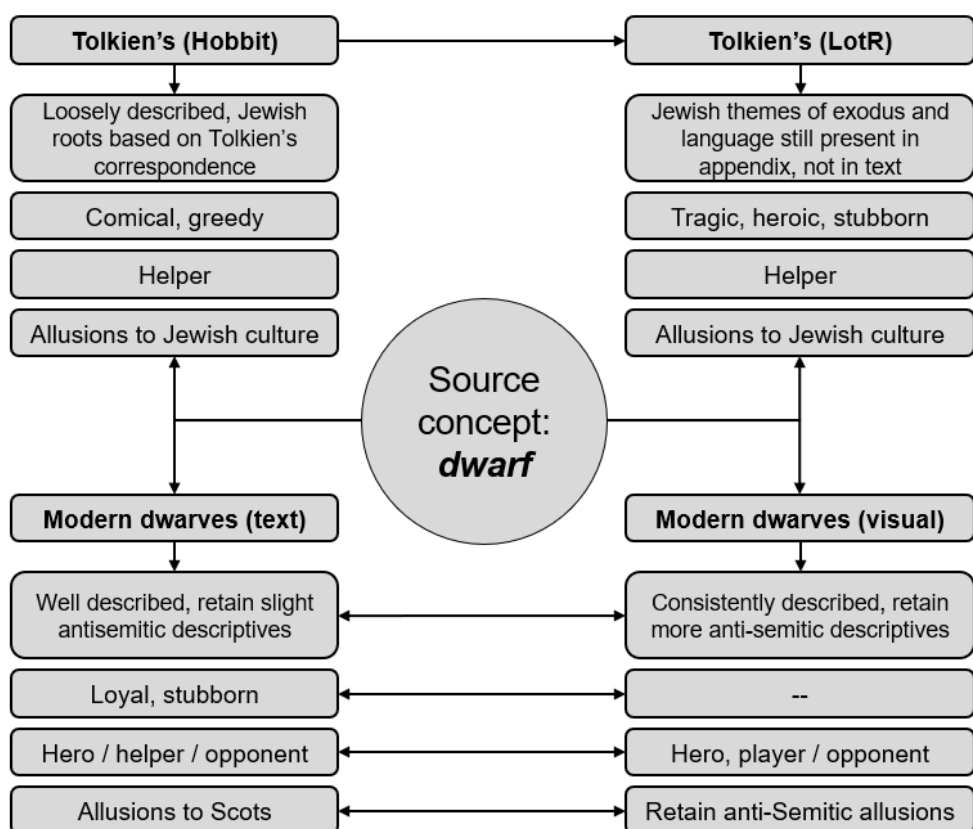


Figure 15 – Different interpretations of the irrealia *dwarf*

In terms of the traits associated with antisemitic descriptions, it is clear that the cultural signifiers have decreased. This occurred even in Tolkien's own texts. In *The Hobbit*, there is greed and secretiveness, even if the latter is used sympathetically, and in *The Lord of the Rings*, only secretiveness is employed, and only in the appendices. In contemporary texts, such markers have largely disappeared. Of the physical traits, due to his rather sparse descriptions, Tolkien's texts contain only notes of beards, which as a single physical signifier is not particularly noteworthy. In modern textual sources, the physical descriptives of small stature, hirsutism, and baldness (the latter two often co-occur) are common, but large noses and protruding ears exist mainly in visual presentations.

Due to the lack of associated cultural signifiers and the shift of the cultural anchoring from Jewish stereotypes to Scottish stereotypes, the remaining physical signifiers can be considered mere curiosities of semiospheric containment.

4.2.3 Goblins

Out of the three partially folkloristically interlinked irrealia discussed in this section, the irrealis of *goblins* has retained and even amplified its antisemitic content the most, while

the two other irrealia have lost most of their allusive anchoring. Unlike dwarves, the defining point of the goblin irrealis – as regards their portrayal in the fantastic – is not in Tolkien, who uses the term as a synonym for orcs, even though he prefers the latter (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 151, 178, 185). In his correspondence, Tolkien notes his deviation from the roots of the term and maintains that the creatures he calls goblins are not the goblins of folklore (see Carpenter 2000: 185). For once, Tolkien's use of the term has not endured in the semiospheres of fantasy. Instead, the term has taken its rather ambiguous and flexible roots from folklore and added antisemitic portrayals and allusions.

Goblins, etymologically likely to descend from the Norman French *gobelin* and the Medieval Latin *gobelinus*, a mischievous spirit, had a wide scope as fairy tale and folklore creatures, and were used as a common name for fairies (see Sikes 1880: 18, 20; Briggs 1976: 57). The underground mine version of the creature, *coblynau*,⁹⁹ was linked in folklore to dwarves and gnomes: “The Coblynau are always given the form of dwarfs, in popular fancy” (Sikes 1880: 27) and “under the general title of Coblynay I class the fairies which haunt the mines, quarries and underground regions of Wales, corresponding to the cabalistic Gnomes” (Sikes 1880: 24). The creatures could be helpful, leading miners to riches, or spiteful, announcing the death of a miner or making general mischief (Sikes 1880: 24, 29). Almost all of these uses seem to be typical examples of folk belief contextualizing the world into understandable functionalities through supernatural helpers and hinderers (Loponen 2006: 5).

Similarly, in Arthur Ryder's *Twenty-Two Goblins* (1917), translated from stories in Sanskrit, his choice of *goblins* for a rendering of the Sanskrit term(s) refers to spirits that possess dead corpses.¹⁰⁰ In some cases, as when the term *goblin* was used to refer to various kinds of fairies under one concept in folklore, some of the uses were of fairies who attended regular human markets, or whose markets humans visited (Sikes 1880: 9). In some descriptives in folklore and poetry, the markets and fairies are deceptive, lead people to moral corruption, or otherwise ruin and tempt Christians. For instance, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*¹⁰¹ (Rossetti 1862) views the fruits sold by the goblin merchants as a metaphoric invitation to forbidden bodily pleasures.

The imagery of fairy gold (with which a fairy / goblin has bought something from a human) turning into dead leaves on sunrise (Sikes 1880: 119, Loponen 2006: 17) and of wandering fairy merchants who have offered deals too good to be true may have given rise to current portrayals. But however the portrayals of goblins and Jews are linked, the link itself is beyond doubt, especially in visual presentations. As with dwarves, it must be

⁹⁹ According to (Sikes 1880: 29, 32), *coblynau* are most likely related to the German *kobold* and share a similar role in folklore as mischievous mine spirits.

¹⁰⁰ The Indian tales had previously been translated by Sir Richard Burton in 1870. Here the creatures were called vampires. In the recent translation by Chandra Rajan in 1995, they are aptly called genies (see Bo Pettersson 2016: 258).

¹⁰¹ See *Goblin Market, and Other Poems* (1862).

noted that in literary texts, the portrayal of goblins' physical attributes is minimal and sometimes non-existent. However, when such texts are adapted to visual media, the physical representations of antisemitic attributes are consistent in the irrealis in the semiospheres of fantastic.¹⁰²

In another interesting twist, in most modern franchises, antisemitic signifiers have crept into the hyperdiegesis with the development of the franchises. Even when, at the start, the goblin irrealis in franchises has been rather close to mischievous or malicious folklore goblin versions, the further a franchise has been developed, the more signifiers linking the irrealis to antisemitic signifiers or historical allusions have been used.

One of the best known recent uses of goblins is to be found in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Starting with the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), the sole bank used by the supernatural beings (including the wizards and witches the protagonists belong to) is run exclusively by goblins. In this case, the use of goblins as bankers may be an allusion to "the gnomes of Zürich," a term used by British politicians in the 1960s (and later in popular culture)¹⁰³ as a popular catchphrase referring to perceived fears of the growing power of Swiss bankers. In the *Harry Potter* series, goblins are discussed in rather non-descriptive terms. The first goblin the protagonist meets in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is described as "about a head shorter than Harry. He had a swarthy, clever face, a pointed beard and, Harry noticed, very long fingers and feet" (Rowling 1997: 56), and in the next few paragraphs, "about a hundred more" goblins are showed weighing coins, examining precious stones, and weighing piles of rubies (Rowling 1997: 56). Although the signifiers of small stature, beards, swarthy, and gold hoarding are all included, and a nastiness of character comes out in a discussion with the goblin Griphook, the imagery remains implied, not explicated, and the allusions could equally well be to some other folk tale creatures, such as the Irish *leprechaun*.¹⁰⁴

As with negative signifiers, sympathetic signifiers tying the goblins to portrayals of Jewish culture increase during the franchise. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007), the last book of the series, the ascension of the main antagonist Voldemort, a racial supremacist, leads to the confiscation of the goblin bank under "pureblood" rule, and with goblins fleeing their homes in fear of ethnic cleansing as "non-pure" people are forced to register their parentage (Rowling 2007: 243–244). In a rather heavy-handed way, this links

¹⁰² There are exceptions, of course. As a noteworthy example, in E.R. Eddison's *The Worm Ouroboros* (1922), a pre-Tolkienesque fantasy, the fantastic aspects of the fantastic races are practically unnoticeable. Even though the goblin anti-hero Lord Gro is portrayed as treasonous, he is very sympathetic and has no signifiers of goblins. In a more recent case, in Sarah Monette's *The Goblin Emperor* (2014), goblins are portrayed in contrast to elves with descriptive words and phrases typically reserved to orcs: "barbarian," "dark and ugly," "skin was almost perfect black [...] stocky and densely muscled [...] underslung jaw" (Monette 2014: 47, 70).

¹⁰³ This includes, for example, Steve Jackson Games's card game *Illuminati* (1982).

¹⁰⁴ In Irish folk tales, a fairy who typically resembles a small bearded old man who hoards a pot of gold.

the narrative to historical allusions emphasized with the antagonists deploring “the necessity of consorting with our long-fingered friends” to deal with “filthy gold” (Rowling 2007: 426). As a positive signifier, goblins are presented as industrious and – similar to the dwarf irrealis – skilled metalworkers (Rowling 2007: 244, 249). Here, the theme of malice is emphasized through the character of Griphook:

The longer they spent time together, the more Harry realised that he did not much like the goblin. Griphook was unexpectedly bloodthirsty, laughed at the idea of pain in lesser creatures, and seemed to relish the possibility that they might have to hurt other wizards. (Rowling 2007: 412)

The ethics of goblins are said to differ from those of humans: “Goblin notions of ownership, payment, and repayment are not the same as human ones” (Rowling 2007: 417). Also, greed and hoarding are explained through differences in how ownership functions: “To a goblin, the rightful and true master of any object is the maker, not the purchaser. All goblin-made objects are, in goblin eyes, rightfully theirs” (Rowling 2007: 418).

If this were a single case of an irrealis within a specific hyperdiegesis acquiring signifiers linked to a racist stereotype within the main cultural semiosphere after its initial introduction, it could be considered a coincidence. However, as will be shown below, similar developments have been constant in various other hyperdiegeses, in which the irrealis of goblins has acquired signifiers of antisemitic portrayals over time.

For example, in the first edition of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplaying Game* (1986: 220–221), goblins (here, smaller relatives of orcs) are introduced as abjects that are treated as generic aggressive semi-intelligent creatures unlinked to any existing culture through semiospheric containment. They have rather typical abject physique and a culture based on squabbling and “inflict[ing] pain and suffering on other creatures.” Their bodies are described as “short [...] bent, twisted and unwashed [...]. Their skin color varies a great deal: some are pale and greenish, some are almost black,” which, although they have small stature and bent back, are common descriptives used of fairy tale goblins. Interestingly, as with dwarves, the visual presentation of the goblins (*Warhammer Fantasy Roleplaying Game* 1986: 220) adds more descriptive terms: pot bellies, baldness, large noses, protruding ears, and squinting eyes.

Even though the physical signifiers – especially with the visual images – are linked to antisemitic portrayals, the cultural portrayal (concentrating on malice and the tendency to murder) makes the creatures rather generic abject creatures. However, by the fourth edition of the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* (1992) miniature game set in the same hyperdiegesis, the cultural portrayal has shifted. In *Warhammer Armies: Orcs & Goblins* (1996: 20, 70), goblins are described as belonging to a nomadic merchant culture: “They journey [...] where they buy, sell, or steal things that they can re-sell to other Orcs and Goblins later on. [...] They particularly enjoy dealing with Orcs as it gives them a chance to outwit their larger and more brutal cousins” and “Some Goblins become very wealthy

by trading in this way and the tribe's King becomes exceedingly rich. Goblins like to show off their wealth." Such descriptions combine greed, lack of ethics, and the signifier of dishonest merchant to the earlier signifiers of malice and murderousness. The qualities are the same throughout the franchise, as can be seen from the description of the *gretchin*, the name of the goblins in the *Warhammer 40.000* setting in the seventh edition sourcebook *Codex: Orks* (2014: 14, 21–22):

Gretchin have large, bulbous heads and wide tattered ears that flatten against their bald pates when they are afraid (which is most of the time). Sharp fangs fill their jaws, ever ready to be sunk into the flesh of the weak or infirm, and malice gleams in their eyes whenever there is an opportunity for violence.

and

In fact the Gretchin have created an entire enterprise culture of their own within their Ork-dominated society, and many Gretchin operate their own black market businesses on the side, selling fungus beer, roasting squigs on sticks, coordinating the bets when a fight breaks out and then looting the resulting corpses.

As these quotes display, the irrealis that started in the hyperdiegesis as generic abjection has, through semiospheric containment, accrued cultural signifiers (large ears, baldness, malice, dishonesty in business) linked with the antisemitic stereotype of Jewish people in the real world cultural semiospheres.

In another popular franchise, the *WarCraft* game series, goblins started as a military unit in the *WarCraft 2* (1995) real-time strategy game. The unit was allusively based on goblin folklore of mischievous tricksters, presented as a unit that would blow itself up with a bomb at the player's command. The irrealis alluded to the *Warhammer* franchise,¹⁰⁵ with the goblins presented as gleeful characters revelling in random destruction. The game manual states:

The mischievous Goblin Sappers are known throughout the Horde for their incredible aptitude for destruction. These diabolical Goblins [...] Although the Goblin Sappers are highly unpredictable and insubordinate, they have become necessary to the plans of conquest maintained by the Horde. (*WarCraft 2* game manual 1995: n.p.)

As the game series progressed, goblins started acquiring antisemitic signifiers, especially after *World of Warcraft* (2004–), a massive multi-player roleplaying game, re-introduced them as immoral merchants. When goblins were presented as a playable race in *World of Warcraft* expansion *Cataclysm* (2009), their hoarding of property and

¹⁰⁵ There are allusions to the goblins' malicious cunning, their green color, their attachment to the orc armies, etc.

unethical behavior was emphasized in a introductory quest chain¹⁰⁶ for the goblin characters, in which goblins capture escaping goblin refugees and sell them as slaves. The signifiers are emphasized in game mechanics that provide goblins with racial abilities such as: “Wheeling and dealing is second nature to goblins, and they always receive a discount from vendors” and “Goblins can access their bank vault from anywhere with the help of a trusted friend.”¹⁰⁷ Even though the storyline for goblin characters introduced signifiers associated with Jews in sympathetic readings, in the form of an exodus from their homeland, the storyline was also marked with negative signifiers linked to the stereotype. The negative view was emphasized in having the refugees betrayed by other goblins who take advantage of the despair of the refugees by selling them passage off their sinking home island, but in fact taking them captives to be sold as slaves (emphasizing the signifiers of greed, lack of ethics, and dishonesty).

¹⁰⁶ The quest chain consists of missions that are given to the player character to introduce the player to the gameplay and the immersive setting of the game.

¹⁰⁷ As quoted on the official *World of Warcraft* website, a paratext to the game: <https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-gb/game/races/goblin>

In visual portrayals, the goblin irrealis displays the same tendency of adding antisemitic signifiers (in comparison to textual presentations) as is present in the dwarf irrealis, but in a much more explicit fashion. In the *Harry Potter* hyperdiegesis, while the allusions and signifiers linking goblins to Jewish culture increased in the series of novels incrementally, the visual imagery presented through the *Harry Potter* films (2001–2011) presents the physical attributes of the goblins with very similar features as in Nazi propaganda posters on Jews (compare Image 18 on page 98 with Image 20), emphasizing signifiers such as pot bellies, smallness, baldness, large, hooked noses, protruding ears,



Image 20

bad posture, and squinting eyes, but interestingly enough leaving out the signifiers of beards and dark skin mentioned in the novels.

The same visual characterization is apparent in *WarCraft* goblins, especially in *World of Warcraft*. In their introduction to the game series in *WarCraft 2*, the goblins' visual imagery borrows from and mimics films such as *Gremlins* (1984) and the portrayal of goblins in the *Warhammer* game franchise. As the irrealis gathered further antisemitic cultural traits in the hyperdiegesis, their visual portrayal in the games shifted. In *World of Warcraft*, the male version of the visualization of the irrealis (see Image 21) emphasizes

traditional signifiers of pot bellies, smallness, baldness, large, hooked noses, protruding ears, bad posture, and squinting eyes. The female version, introduced in the expansion *Cataclysm* (2009) as goblins were made a playable race, applies the same mechanics as displayed in the orc irrealis (see 4.1.3), with the signifiers of the Other in a subtler form than in the male version, and with the body and facial features humanized (or more orc-like) in comparison to the portrayal of the male version.



Image 21

When originating in visual media, the goblin irrealis has tended to have the same recognizable characteristics, whether the irrealis is called ‘goblin’ or by another name. A prime example of this would be the character of Watto (see Image 22) in *Star Wars: Phantom Menace* (1999). When introduced, Watto is portrayed as a mean and greedy merchant, who holds the protagonist Anakin and his mother Shmi as slave labor after having won them through gambling. In addition to some animalistic features (e.g. wings and trunk), Watto’s physical appearance is to some extent based on the abject stereotype of the Jewish merchant. He is small and bald, has a pot belly, a bent back, and an extremely large nose and squinting eyes. His skin is dark grey, except for a paler highlight on his pot belly. Watto’s stereotypical imagery was explicit enough to cause a discussion in various media about the character’s antisemitic portrayal.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Hoberman 1999, Gottlieb 1999, and Williams 1999 for media discussion on the character.

Another popular example of the phenomenon are the Ferengi from *Star Trek*, originating in *Star Trek: the Next Generation* (1987–1994), and explored more fully in *Star Trek: Deep Space 9* (1993–1999). The Ferengi were introduced in the first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*¹⁰⁹ as recurring antagonists, with their culture grounded on an especially unethical business mode based on the concept of *caveat emptor*: let the buyer beware. The Ferengi are portrayed as unethical and malicious, and with secretive tendencies.¹¹⁰



Image 23

The visual imagery of the Ferengi (see Image 23) corresponds to antisemitic imagery from the beginning, utilizing most of the signifiers for the stereotype. The emphasis is on their small stature, baldness, prominent noses, protruding ears, bad posture, squint, and skin that is darker than that of most of the protagonists.



Image 23

Especially after *Star Trek: Deep Space 9* was launched with an ensemble cast containing one Ferengi

¹⁰⁹ The Ferengi were mentioned in the series pilot *Encounter at Farpoint* (aired Sept. 28, 1987) and shown for the first time in the fifth episode of the series, *The Last Outpost* (aired Oct. 19, 1987).

¹¹⁰ Their culture and capabilities more or less remain mysteries to the protagonists (and the viewers) until the episode they are shown in.

antihero protagonist, the Ferengi culture is explored further, and the stereotypical features are emphasized. Although the Ferengi characters are given some humanizing characteristics and context, they are portrayed even more blatantly through greed and the drive to do dishonest bargains through unethical choices, with lecherous tendencies and miserliness highlighted through comic relief characters such as the Grand Nagus, the leader of the Ferengi Empire. Through its development in the hyperdiegesis, the Ferengi display the same abject signifiers mainly related to the stereotype of the dishonest Jewish merchant as do the earlier examples of the *Warhammer*, *WarCraft*, and the *Harry Potter* series.

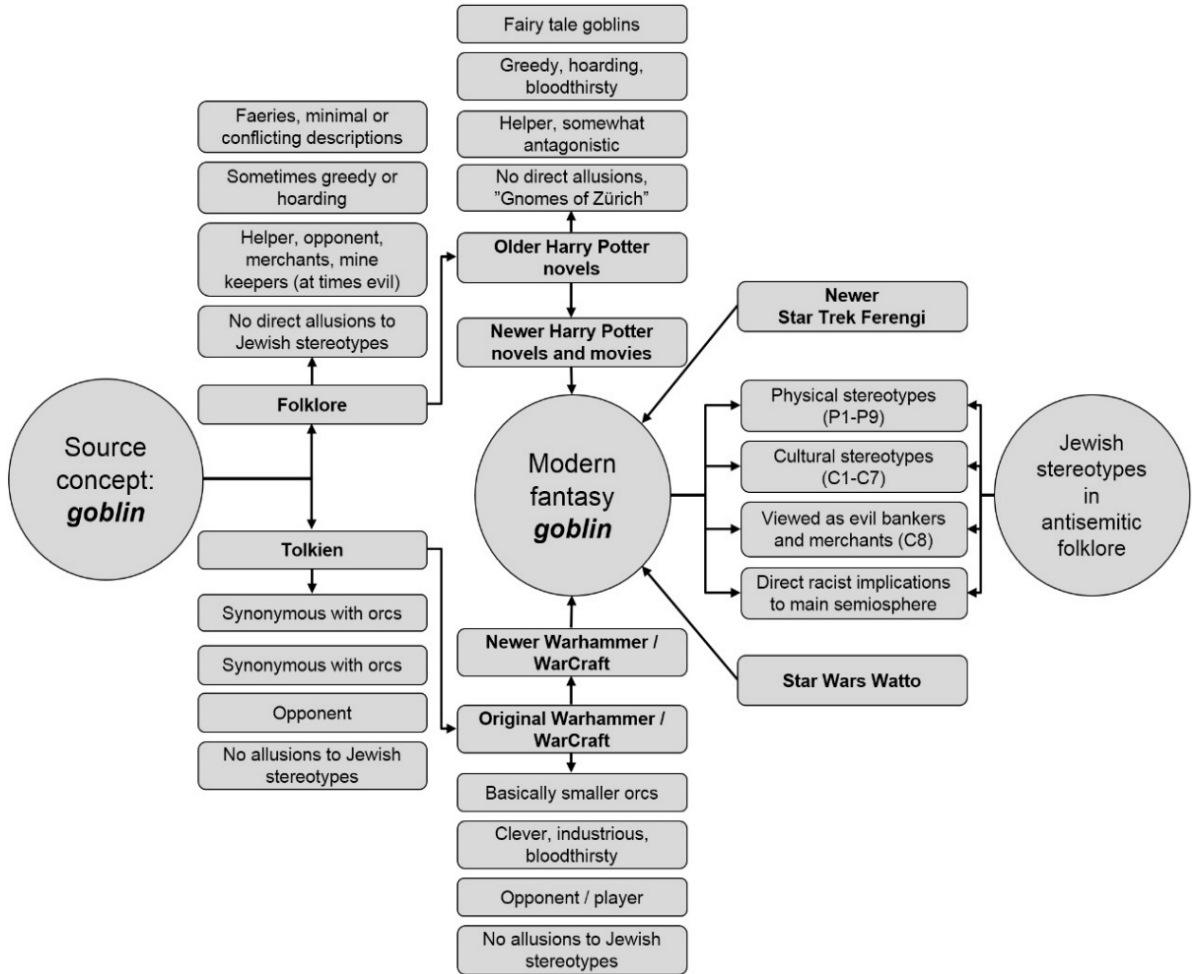


Figure 16 – Different interpretations of the irrealis goblin

As Figure 16 above displays, the irrealis started with some signifiers related to the antisemitic portrayals of Jews, and in each case, the irrealia has, as the respective hyperdiegesis has developed, added more signifiers from the same stereotype.

4.2.4 Gnomes

Why did the goblin irrealis start to gather additional signifiers linked to the antisemitic signified in each case as the hyperdiegeses developed, while the dwarf irrealis developed in the opposite direction, shedding both antisemitic signifiers and sympathetic allusions to Jewish culture throughout its development? The reason for this development can only be hypothesized. While dwarves originated in the genres of the fantastic as protagonists and Greimasian helpers, goblins started in either an antagonistic or a semi-antagonistic role, thus making the addition of abject features from within a cultural stereotype easier. This hypothesis seems supported by the development of a third irrealis starting partially from the same roots: that of *gnomes*.

Although the concept of gnomes was popularized in Paracelsus' texts in the sixteenth century¹¹¹ as a synonym for *Pygmaei*, elemental beings associated with earth, by the nineteenth century they had become synonymous with goblins and dwarves in folktales and poetry. For example, Nathanael Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* (1837: 179) contrasts fairies and gnomes by associating gnomes with ugliness, "small enough to be king of the fairies, and ugly enough to be king of the gnomes." In appearance, gnomes became rather similar to dwarves and ugly descriptions of goblins; in folk tales, gnomes were seen as small, disfigured (often hunchbacked) creatures resembling "dry, gnarled old men."¹¹² As for function, gnomes were used like dwarves: for example, Franz Hartmann's *Unter den Gnomen im Untersberg* (1895) portrayed gnomes hoarding or guarding a vast underground treasure within a mountain. Their function as hoarders continued into the twentieth century. As noted above, in the 1960s, British politicians popularized the term "the Gnomes of Zürich" to refer to Swiss bankers and the fears that the Swiss banking system was hoarding gold and currencies from the rest of the Europe. The physical form was solidified in the main cultural semiospheres to resemble that of dwarves by the early twentieth century at the latest, as garden gnomes, resembling bearded dwarves (and known as *Gartenzwerge*, "garden dwarves," in German) became popular lawn ornaments.

In contemporary use in the semiospheres of the fantastic, the only original attributes from the gnomes that have survived into the genres of the fantastic are their small stature and their association with earth and magic. As with the other irrealia discussed above, the modern use of gnomes as an irrealis owes partially to two sources. First, J.R.R. Tolkien (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 318) used the term to refer to the elven race of Noldor, the most technologically advanced of his elven races, "always on the side of 'science and technology.'" However, by 1962, he had changed his mind: "But I have abandoned it, since it is quite impossible to dissociate the name from the popular associations of the Paracelsan *gnomus* = *pygmaeus*. Since the word is used [...] for 'dwarves', regrettable confusion would be caused" (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 318). Second, *Dungeons &*

¹¹¹ See *Liber de Nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et de caeteris spiritibus* (1566).

¹¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/236317/gnome>

Dragons introduced gnomes as a player character race in *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 1st ed.* (1978), emphasizing the race's affinity with magic.

Like the dwarf and goblin irrealia, the gnome irrealis had initial antisemitic signifiers that pointed toward the stereotype. Their small stature, occasional disfigurement, emphasized noses and beards both in lawn ornaments and in visual portrayals in games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, as well as their affinity with earthly treasures and allusions to Swiss bankers and secretiveness in folk tales (and Paracelsus) would have been grounds for an irrealis whose gaps would have been easy to fill with further antisemitic signifiers, as is the case with goblins. However, their placement as protagonists in *Dungeons & Dragons* as a subject and Tolkien's use of the term as protagonists made the irrealis a non-object, effectively inhibiting the use of object qualities associated with it. In subsequent use, as gnomes have occurred on the non-object side, their development has mirrored that of dwarves instead of that of goblins.

In the *WarCraft* games, for example, gnomes have been used as a "positive" version of goblins: while the goblins accrued further negative antisemitic signifiers, the gnomes have shed them. While they have retained the physical signifiers of small stature, emphasized noses and beards (see Image 24), they have lost their affinity to treasure hoarding, secretiveness, and occasional disfigurements. Instead, they have retained *Dungeons & Dragons*' affinity to magic and Tolkien's affinity to technology – in both, they are portrayed as partially mischievous subjects that may cause similar disasters as goblins, but with a positive, non-object character.



Image 24

There are, understandably, exceptions to this rule. In the video game *Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura* (2001), gnomes are presented in a role typically reserved for goblins in fantasy fiction, handling banking and commerce in a steampunk Victorian setting (see Image 25). They are motivated mainly by the accumulation of wealth, and they run conspiracies and eugenics programs on orcs. The portrayal of gnomes in the game seems like a satire of antisemitic propaganda, pointedly associating gnomes with the worst of racist portrayals and conspiracy theories on Jews.



Image 25

Figure 17 presents the development (and transitions) of the gnome irrealis:

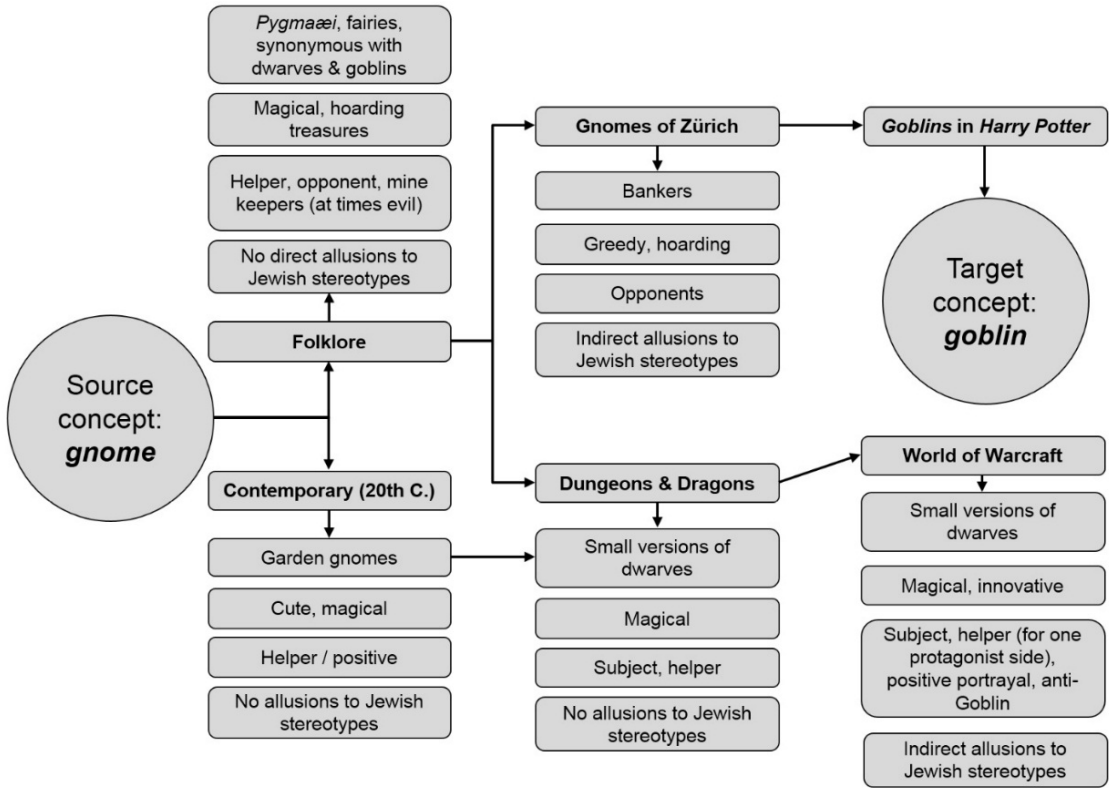


Figure 17 – Different interpretations of the irrealis *gnome*

Just as the dwarf and goblin irrealia, the gnome irrealis has evolved through various stages. It is noteworthy that in some modern cases, the combination of antisemitic attributes and actantial role as an opponent have led to the stereotypical gnome irrealis to be renamed as goblins, while the combination of the actantial role of helpers or subjects have led to a positive portrayal, in which the typically antisemitic features are mainly shed.

4.3 Conclusions

In these case studies, my aim was to examine the development of four widely spread twentieth century irrealia and to look for common mechanisms in their evolution. I aimed to discover, whether the inclusivity or exclusivity of an irrealis guided their development and the retention or shedding of racial signifiers in the development of the irrealia.

My working hypothesis was that abjection may be directly correlated to the use of negative signifiers related to racialized or racist signifiers copied from real world stereotypes. Furthermore, racial signifiers retained through semiospheric containment may strongly correlate with whether the irrealia are portrayed as positive or negative, which guides their inclusivity or exclusivity: a positive irrealis is more typically inclusive, and a

negative irrealis typically exclusive. Thus, an exclusive irrealis might be governed through signifiers of abjection inherent in the preoriginating racial stereotypes, and the signifiers may either be retained through semiospheric containment or replaced with new negative racial stereotypes during the evolution of the irrealis.

However, as revealed by the case studies, the initial hypothesis was rather straightforward, and while the actual development of the irrealia often complied with it, there were additional variables. Whereas dwarves and gnomes started in the genres of the fantastic from a non-abject position, orcs and goblins were portrayed through states of abjection, and this seems to have affected their development in both the semiospheres and in specific hyperdiegeses within the semiospheres. What is more, while dwarves and gnomes have shed their allusions to Jewish culture (whether sympathetic or antisemitic), goblins have gained further antisemitic signifiers in each of the examined semiospheres – especially in their visual portrayals. Similarly, as orcs started from an abject position, their development has matched the signifiers of racial stereotypes. It is interesting to note that goblins have continued to accumulate these signifiers even in semiospheres containing the other examined irrealia. In contrast, although negative portrayals of orcs are still common,¹¹³ in some hyperdiegeses orcs have been deconstructed and interpreted through sympathetic readings based on their position as the abject Other.

As shown above, in their incarnations in literary fantasy and games (both analog and digital), the dwarf irrealis has lost most of its earlier links to both sympathetic and antisemitic portrayals of Jews. It has thus shedding the motifs of exile and secret language, keeping only the typical antisemitic descriptives of large noses, partial baldness, and occasional greed, while all of these have been retained in the goblin irrealis. On the other hand, recently, dwarves are described in terms of loyalty, industriousness, metalwork, love of beer, muscularity, Scottish accents, sturdiness, and exceptional willpower. Similarly, in the gnome irrealis, the development has been toward inclusive treatment through games and literature. It is noteworthy that in cases like the Gnomes of Zürich, in which gnomes have had negative (even if indirect) racial signifiers typically attributed to Jews in antisemitic folk tales and propaganda, further allusions to them, as in *Harry Potter*, changes them into goblins while adding further antisemitic signifiers. In the rare example of clearly antisemitic treatment of gnomes, such as in *Arcanum* (2001), they are portrayed in terms of satirical and over-emphasized pseudo-Victorian fiction.

As my analysis of the orc and goblin irrealia have shown, irrealia that started within the hyperdiegeses as generic abjects with some physical descriptions linked to racial portrayals have, through semiospheric containment, accrued cultural signifiers historically linked to physical descriptions in portrayals within the cultural semiospheres. However, as we have seen, the orc and goblin irrealia have clearly divergent evolutionary paths. While the similar evolution of the dwarf and gnome irrealia can be explained by their positive and inclusive readings throughout the semiospheres, the differences between

¹¹³ See *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* films.

development of the orc and goblin irrealia – often within the same hyperdiegeses – is harder to fathom.

One explanation may lie in the origin of the irrealia. While dwarves and gnomes started in the genres of the fantastic as protagonists and Greimasian helpers, both goblins and orcs originated either in an antagonistic or a semi-antagonistic role. However, while the orc irrealis has had obvious racial signifiers linking it to the main cultural semiosphere of their creation, the goblin irrealis has had fewer and less evident links – and in some cases mixed linkage, as in Tolkien’s texts, in which orcs and goblins are used interchangeably.

In the orc irrealis, there are now two conflicting versions based on how the irrealis is treated in a hyperdiegesis. Due to Peter Jackson’s film adaptations, Tolkien’s exclusive irrealis of the monstrous Other still dominates the reading of the orc irrealis. In this version, the racial signifiers linking the orcs to colonialist readings of African or African American blacks are still emphasized, and the signifiers used in the colonial texts are still relevant. However, the deconstructed version of the misunderstood Other and victim of racist readings of history thrives in games and literature, driven both by orc-centric narratives and the inclusion of orcs as player characters in both multiplayer and single-player digital and non-digital games.¹¹⁴

It is interesting to note that such deconstructed portrayals are not uncommon for popular irrealia that have been perceived as racial or cultural readings. For example, the elf, a mainly positive irrealis in *The Lord of the Rings*,¹¹⁵ was deconstructed in the *Warhammer* and *Warhammer 40K* hyperdiegesis as British upper class and given a rather unsympathetic character. The portrayals of elves as Aryan snobs looking down on “lesser races,” such as humans, have been common in the past decades,¹¹⁶ and they have been exploited in (mass) fantasy at least since the 1980s. Similarly, Klingons from *Star Trek*, portrayed as an evil, dark-skinned humanoid race in the original series, have been deconstructed and explored in the later series.¹¹⁷ As noted above, one reason for this development seems to originate in the trend of humanizing fantastic monsters, which started for orcs and orc-like creatures in the 1990s. Yet, why has this development affected orcs differently than goblins?

¹¹⁴ As we have seen, such games at times center on the problems of the orcs as subjects seeking equality in human-dominated cultures.

¹¹⁵ This use is more ambivalent in *The Hobbit*, both in the novel and the films.

¹¹⁶ The reading is not original or new: even Tolkien’s elves have characteristics of arrogance and disdain of humans, and British folk tales of Tuatha de Danann and sidhe often include similar descriptions.

¹¹⁷ Especially in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–1994) and *Star Trek: Deep Space 9* (1993–1999), while *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995–2001) had a half-Klingon protagonist in the main cast. *Star Trek: Discovery* (2017–) has in fact returned to the old roots of the irrealia, with Klingons being portrayed mainly with dark skin, tribalistic society, and cannibalism.

In comparison to orcs, while the goblin irrealis has started with some signifiers related to the antisemitic portrayals of Jews, the irrealis has added more antisemitic signifiers in each studied hyperdiegesis throughout its evolution. Even in cases in which goblins have started with only a few signifiers linked to antisemitic portrayals of Jews, the irrealis has accrued further antisemitic signifiers as it has developed. This development does not seem to have changed even in cases in which goblins have been used as viewpoint characters. Unlike orcs, goblins have rarely been treated as main subjects even in games where they are playable characters, and even when they are protagonists, there have been antisemitic signifiers that accumulate with the evolution of the hyperdiegesis. Even in texts in which a goblin archetype is either a viewpoint character or a main character, such as *Of Orcs and Men* (2012), *World of Warcraft* (2004–), and *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*¹¹⁸ (1993–1999), sympathetic portrayals tend to be based on the idea that the character may have moral stature or empathy *despite* the antisemitic signifiers portrayed by the character. A further reason for the different evolutionary paths may be in the obvious quality of the racial signifiers. While in the orc irrealis, the signifiers were used in an explicit way ever since the origin of the irrealis, the goblin irrealis has had more implicit links, starting in many hyperdiegeses as a “lesser orc” with few individual characteristics. It may be this lack of *unique* definition that led the irrealis to accrue further signifiers around its few defined signifiers.

So far, my analysis has stayed within the Anglo-American cultural semiopshere. However, while analyzing irrealia within a single cultural semiosphere can provide interesting results, the translation of those irrealia to another language can provide further insights for both the source and target cultural semiospheres. In the following chapter, I examine how this evolution comes across when irrealia are translated between languages into other main cultural semiospheres.

¹¹⁸ This depends on whether the Ferengi are considered to belong to the goblin archetype.

5 TRANSLATING IRREALIA

While studying the evolution of irrealia in one language provides a view of how both the development of a real world culture and the evolution of a genre can affect irrealia in one or multiple hyperdiegeses, studying their translation into another language (and thus another cultural semiosphere) can provide interesting reflections on the original allusions and their cultural links.

In this chapter, as a case study, I examine certain points in the translation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* into Finnish, since it is one of the most seminal translations in the Finnish semiosphere of fantasy. The choice of a Finnish translation was strictly due to my knowledge of Finnish and its idioms and allusions. My aim is to discuss the construction of race in the translations, based on the dual signified of the irrealia introduced in chapter 4. My focus is especially on the translation of signifiers related to the referred archetypes in the *orc* irrealis. How do culture specific signifiers related to racial stereotypes and contained within a fantastic concept translate into other languages with different cultural semiospheres, and how are regional or social dialects translated, if they are intra-culturally allusive in the original texts? It should be noted that this limited case study is not meant to provide a general theory on how translation affects an irrealis. Rather, the aim is to provide an example of how the irrealis has changed in this specific case.

Unlike the previous chapter, which was transmedial in nature, this chapter is mainly literature oriented. While fantastic literature uses language to *describe* its irrealia, audiovisual arts *show* the irrealia, and less is depicted through dialogue. Thus, audiovisual texts and their translations tend to contain fewer instances of physical description. Secondly, even in cases of spoken – and thus translatable – physical descriptions in audiovisual adaptations, visual descriptions are based on their literary origins and defined visually, which limits the translators' choices largely to omission or denotative translation. Furthermore, games created in English are rarely translated into Finnish:¹¹⁹ out of the seminal texts discussed above, only a few games (both digital and non-digital) have been translated into Finnish, and the quality of some of them calls in question whether they can be called legitimate translations.¹²⁰

5.1 Translation of the Fantastic into Finnish

Science fiction and fantasy have been translated to other languages as long as the genres have existed. Jules Verne's first novel, *Cinq semaines en ballon*, was translated (badly)

¹¹⁹ Quite a few are translated into major languages such as Spanish, French, Chinese, or Russian.

¹²⁰ As a notable example, the seminal 1988 translation of *Dungeons & Dragons* into Finnish has been widely discussed (see e.g. Raudaskoski 2014). I decided to leave it out of the scope of this study due to the problematic amateurish translation errors of the target text.

into English in 1869, just over five years after it was published, and many of his other novels were translated much more quickly, since Americans were eager to read his tales of *Voyages extraordinaires*. Currently, the majority of science fiction and fantasy translations are made from English to other languages, while other languages as source languages are in a minority. Although there are (sometimes well-established and significant) varieties in semiospheres of the fantastic on the global scale,¹²¹ this dominance currently positions the Anglo-American semiospheres of fantasy and science fiction as the only fully international semiospheres of the genres.

In Finland, the first science fiction and fantasy translations were into Swedish during the nineteenth century, and they included fairy tales and short stories by figures such as H.C. Andersen (Koponen and Sisättö 2011: 41). Translations of the fantastic into Finnish were extremely rare in nineteenth century, with Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871) as the first instance. The rate picked up during the last decades of the nineteenth century, as translations into Finnish became more common, including the translation of many novels by Jules Verne between 1879 and 1882 (Koponen and Sisättö 2011: 41). At the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the classics of the newly emerging genre of science fiction had been translated before 1917, and translation of science fiction has not slowed down in the twentieth or early twenty-first centuries.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, translations of the fantastic in Finland were still mainly from French to Swedish (Koponen and Sisättö 2011: 41) and were published as serializations in newspapers. In addition to Verne, texts by for example Émile Souvestren and Pierre Véron were translated. Translations of the fantastic into Finnish during this period also include texts by Edgar Allan Poe, H.G. Wells, Viktor Pettersson, and Axel Fogelholm, to name a few.

During the past hundred years, science fiction and fantasy have been translated extensively from English to Finnish. Thus, it is astonishing how little these translations have been studied and analyzed in translation studies. This is especially odd considering the high quality of Finnish translations of the fantastic. For example, the acclaimed translations by Kersti Juva and Eila Pennanen (J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*), Jaana Kapari-Jatta (J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series), J. Pekka Mäkelä (e.g. Philip K. Dick's main novels and China Miéville's *The City and the City*) and Johanna Vainikainen-Uusitalo (Gene Wolfe's *Shadow of the Torturer* and Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter*) have established the translation of the fantastic in terms of quality, and the sheer number of fantasy translations in the 1990s have definitely been established in terms of quantity and sales. For example, Satu Hlinovsky's translations of George R.R. Martin's

¹²¹ Examples include fantasy in France, magical realism in Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, Eastern European fantasy and science fiction, and Japanese science fiction.

series *The Song of Ice and Fire*¹²² have been a major commercial success, not least owing to the television series.

Translations from Finnish to English have been more erratic and rare; Johanna Sinisalo's *Ennen päivänlaskua ei voi*, translated by Herbert Lomas as *Not Before Sundown* (GB, 2003) / *Troll – A Love Story* (US, 2004) might still be the most high profile translation together with Leena Krohn's *Collected Fiction* (2015).¹²³ Other internationally notable Finnish fantasists such as Hannu Rajaniemi¹²⁴ and Emmi Itäranta¹²⁵ either write originally in English or in both English and Finnish.

As regards televised series or films based on novels, it is interesting to note that at least in the popular hyperdiegesis, the subtitled translations of their adaptations are not original translations but rather founded on earlier, mostly book translations. In *The Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit* films, the translations were based on Kersti Juva's translations of the terminology, such as *örkki* (orc), *Kontu* (Shire), *Rautapiha* (Isengard), and *haltia* (elf).

Similarly, the translations in the *Harry Potter* films were based on Kapari-Jatta's translations of the novels. Such a relationship does not exist only between novels and audiovisual arts: the translations of the rebooted *Star Trek* films *Star Trek* (2009) and *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013) were founded on Antero Helasvuo's translations of the original television series from the 1980s. Helasvuo's *vaiheinen* (*phaser*), *poimuajo* (*warp drive*), *Liitto* (*Federation*), and *siirrin* (*transporter*) have rather consistently stayed with the various *Star Trek* series and films since their conception.¹²⁶

Similarly, in the television series *Game of Thrones*, the Finnish subtitles use terminology for the irrealia and names which is based on Satu Hlinovsky's translations of the novels. In this case, the use of terminology creates an interesting issue as to the translation of irrealia within a hyperdiegesis. As Hlinovsky notes (see Majander 2015), translated terminology in the subtitles of the series – after the first season – is used without the consent of the publisher and translator of the translated novels, and in some cases against the explicit will of the publisher. Similarly, the name of the original translator of the irrealia terminology is not displayed in the translated television series after the first

¹²² The series starts with *A Game of Thrones* (1996), currently comprising of five novels; in Finnish *Tulen ja jään laulu*, starting with *Valtaistuinpeli* (2003).

¹²³ Translated by Eva Buckwald, Bethany Fox, Hildi Hawkins, Anselm Hollo, Vivii Hyvönen, Leena Likitalo, Herbert Lomas, J. Robert Tupasela, and Anna Volmari.

¹²⁴ His works include the posthumanist novels *The Quantum Thief* (2010), *The Fractal Prince* (2012), and *The Causal Angel* (2014), along with the post-noir ghost story *Summerland* (2018), translated into Finnish by Antti Autio as *Kvanttivaras* (2011), *Fraktaaliruhtinas* (2013), and *Kausaaliemkeli* (2014), and *Kesämaa* (2018), translated by Tero Valkonen.

¹²⁵ Itäranta's *Teemestarin kirja* (2012) / *The Memory of Water* (2014) was written by the author in Finnish and English.

¹²⁶ See Hietamaa 2012 for a study on the Finnish translations in *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*.

season. Hence, the moral and legal terminology issues concerning the names of translated irrealia already rooted in a hyperdiegesis – and the translators’ rights to the terminology – are worth further study. However, if the moral and legal issues are removed from the equation, the case provides a view of how terminology within a hyperdiegesis can take an independent existence in the readers’ minds.

All of these translations are considered to be either of high quality, or they have become accepted into their respective semiospheres and hyperdiegeses with time – or both. This seems to imply that translations function within a hyperdiegesis much like the original texts.¹²⁷ Moreover, it would seem that target renderings in audiovisual translations can be considered irrealia items on their own, evolving independently of the source language versions. Even if the visual signifiers, the source language terms, and their target language renditions are the same, the linguistic signifiers can deviate from the original ones through culture specific allusions and connotations. I will discuss the repercussions of this below.

5.2 The Translation of Fantasy: Translating Objects

The base concepts that comprise objects are universal – filth, excrement, sexual behavior, taboos. However, throughout human history, these concepts have been used to connect the stigma of abjection in other cultures or sub-cultures through stereotypes overlaid on their cultural semiospheres. Concepts relating to abjection have been added to specific groups for cultural and political reasons, and as examined in the previous chapters, qualities of abjection have been added to cultural Others even before antiquity.¹²⁸ During the colonial phase, qualities of abjection were added to the stereotyping of the colonized. For example, discourse on African blacks was laden with hypersexualization, animalistic features, and lack of cleanliness.

As we have seen, creatures of the fantastic often share qualities of abjection that pervade their source culture’s conceptions of cultural minorities or other cultures. While the qualities of abjection can be said to be universal, their attachment to a group of cultural others is specific to the source culture and cultures affected by the source culture through, for example, colonialization, cultural exchange, or mass media dominance.

This attachment can hardly be exaggerated, especially in the case of transmedial adaptations and renditions. Unlike literary texts, visual presentations are not affected by translation. While in a literary text, qualities of abjection can be omitted, switched to

¹²⁷ Alternatively, it may be the case that there is a distinction between translations as such and the renderings of the translations in audiovisual subtitling, especially in the case when source text novels are adapted to audiovisual form. Viewers who have already read translations of the source texts might expect to see familiar forms of the translated terms in the subtitles. This, however, is conjecture, and additional research in reader expectations and subtitling strategies would be required.

¹²⁸ For an in-depth study on this process in Graeco-Roman literary tradition, see Lampinen (2013).

equivalent ones, changed, or enhanced through various translation strategies,¹²⁹ in audiovisual adaptations most of the qualities are retained, regardless of how the dialogue is translated. Thus, for most popular irrealia, literary translations play a minor role in their *evolution* in target languages. However, the *origins* of popular irrealia in target languages can provide an interesting view on the translation of abjection, especially when translations of literary texts are published before there are popular audiovisual adaptations that contain the irrealia (and thus “stabilize” its visual rendering).

I limit the examination of the translation of irrealia to one popular irrealis: the orcs of *The Lord of the Rings*, linked to the themes and mechanisms used by Tolkien in creating evil both as characters and as races in the text. Kersti Juva’s and Eila Pennanen’s translation¹³⁰ of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955), *Taru sormusten herrasta* (1973–1975),¹³¹ was done before there were any major audiovisual adaptations of the texts, and when the semiosphere of fantasy in Finland still lacked many Tolkienesque irrealia. Therefore, many of the names of the translated irrealia were unique at the time of translation. The translation shaped the semiosphere of fantasy in Finland, and the terminology created by Juva and Pennanen has continued to live on and evolve in the semiosphere.

When discussing attributes such as *black* or *dark*, I focus on cases in which they are clearly used to refer to skin color. I will disregard all cases in which they refer to hair color, tidings, clothing, items, or the lack of light, except in cases where the terms can be interpreted as referring either to skin or to light. As Finnish has separate terms for dark in color (*tumma*) and dark resulting from the lack of light (*pimeä*),¹³² the translator’s choice can in some places illuminate the interpretation of the attribute. Furthermore, I disregard all cases in which *dark* or *black* are part of a title; for example, when discussing *The Lord of the Rings*, where there are 892 instances of *dark*¹³³ and 519 of *black*,¹³⁴ 86 of the instances of *dark* and 86 of *black* refer to specific titles or names.¹³⁵ Unlike *swarthy*, which is used nine times in *The Lord of the Rings*, always referring to skin color, the majority of *dark* and *black* in the book refer to lack of light (or poorly illuminated characters). Another

¹²⁹ See 2.2.3 for a definition of translation strategies.

¹³⁰ The first two books translated by Kersti Juva, Eila Pennanen and Panu Pekkanen (poems), and the third by Kersti Juva and Panu Pekkanen (poems).

¹³¹ The trilogy consists of *Sormuksen ritarit* (1973), *Kaksi tornia* (1974), and *Kuninkaan paluu* (1975).

¹³² However, there is some overlap in the terms: *tumma* is sometimes used to refer to darkness resulting from the lack of light, especially when describing objects or characters that are poorly lit.

¹³³ The number does not include the 247 instances of *darkness* or 13 instances of *darkly*.

¹³⁴ The number does not include the six instances of *blackened*.

¹³⁵ 51 instances of *Dark Lord*, 35 of *Dark Tower*, 51 of *Black Rider*, 21 of *Black Gate*, 12 of *Black Land*, and two of *Black Hand*.

typical use is the metaphor *dark is evil* or *black is evil*, also based on lack of light, that is, evil lurking in the darkness of night, which is a concept common in most cultures. I limit my analysis to those that refer to skin color or may be considered to refer to it. Other uses of *dark*, as in the following example, are not included:

The *dark* bent shapes of Gandalf and Aragorn only a pace or two ahead could hardly be seen. (Tolkien 2009: 305)

In contrast, the following passage is included in the analysis. Although lack of light is mentioned in the passage, the reference to skin color is clear:

In the twilight he saw a large *black* Orc, probably Ugluk. (Tolkien 2009: 468)

As a third example, consider:

The *dark* shapes of the Orcs in front grew dim, and then were swallowed up. (Tolkien 2009: 470)

Since this can refer either to the lack of light or to the metaphor *dark is evil*, or to skin color, its rendition in the translation falls within the scope of this study.

5.3 Translations of Abjection in Tolkien into Finnish

If we consider the case of orcs as presented earlier (see 4.1), the translation of the orc irrealis offers multiple potential sub-semiospheres according to which they can be translated. In their translation of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Juva and Pennanen pioneered fantasy translation into Finnish, and Juva has continued to define the terminology for the semiosphere of the fantastic in her later work. Even though Tolkien's *The Hobbit* was translated into Finnish as *Lohikäärmevuori* in 1973 by Risto Pitkänen, the same year as the first book of *The Lord of the Rings* was translated, the translation strategies and aims of the two translations were considerably different.

While *The Hobbit* was written as a children's book, and Pitkänen's *Lohikäärmevuori* aimed to domesticate its translation for children as the main audience (with easy readability and fairy tale like style as a global strategy), *The Lord of the Rings* was written as an epic and was translated into Finnish with an adult audience in mind. As regards *The Hobbit*, in 1985 Juva translated a new version of the book (titled *Hobitti eli sinne ja takaisin*), basing her translation of specific irrealia on terminology used in *Taru sormusten herrasta*. By now, Juva's translations are seen as the dominating central translations in the semiosphere. The pervasiveness of the irrealia terminology derived from the translation has been extensive even in the main cultural semiosphere. For example, Juva's decision to translate *elf* as *haltia* instead of *haltija* led to the former form's continuing popularity; the former form had been in common use before an official decision by the Finnish Language Board (*Suomen kielen lautakunta*) declared only the latter form valid in 1937. After Juva's blog post (Juva 2013) about the two forms, the board

reintegrated the form *haltia* as an accepted form (Maamies 2013), citing its wide use in fantasy literature as one reason.

Taru sormusten herrasta is generally regarded as a translation faithful to Tolkien, both in the structure and the connotations of the text, suffused with the intentionally anachronized epic archaisms of Tolkien's prose. For *orc*, Juva's translation was *örkki*. Even if the word had some varied and vague etymology in Finnish before its use in the translation (Juva 2013), the translation made *örkki* a commonly used term for a version of monstrosity in Finnish mainstream culture (especially after Jackson's film versions).

Literary translation is rarely about translating single words, sentences, or paragraphs, but rather about translating the meanings conveyed by the source text. The translator's responsibility is to choose and utilize the tools and strategies that enable the best possible outcome in the target text (see 2.2.1–2.2.3). However, when irrealia act as – or contain – both textual and metatextual elements, the translation of specific micro-level structures and features such as single words bears closer inspection, as they act as building blocks of the irrealia when it is transferred to a new language and cultural semiosphere.

As noted in 4.1, the abjection of orcs in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is created through adjectives or descriptive phrases that were often used of African or African American blacks in colonial literature, including imagery of dark skin, portrayals of tribalism and cannibalism, linguistic ineptitude, bad temper, low intelligence with “low” evil cunning, willingness to be slaves, broad, flat faces, and ape-like or animalistic features, such as long arms with knuckles dragging on the ground. In contrast, the Caucasian protagonists are described through the fairness of their skin (with a few exceptions), eloquent vocabulary, and cultures conforming to the ideas and ideals of fictive presentations of European medieval times.

Below, I discuss the strategies employed by the translators when first turning the orcs in *The Lord of the Rings* into Finnish. This is done by examining various traits of abjection and how they are rendered in the target text. My main interest is in the depictions of skin color in both a positive and a negative light; the use of *black* and *dark* in relation to descriptions of evil characters; the creation of contrast through *fair* and *white* with good characters; orc dialogue with its suggestions colloquial language use; and references to cannibalism and willing slavery.

It should be noted that even though darkness of skin is used to denote evil throughout the source text, as such it does not act as a sole description of evil, even though it is used to denote additional distance from greatness or purity. Purity (or closeness to elves), on the other hand, is described in terms of fairness and white skin, while mixed blood or lack of purity (or closeness to evil races) is described in terms of darkness of skin. Two of the collocations within the source text are the combination of *tall* and *light skin*

and *dark* combined with *shortness*.¹³⁶ In such collocations, despite some exceptions, skin color is translated denotatively along the lines of Chesterman's (1997: 94) strategy of literal translation:¹³⁷

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(1a) They were reckoned men of Gondor, yet their blood was mingled, and there were <i>short</i> and <i>swarthy</i> folk among them whose sires came more from the forgotten men who housed in the shadow of the hills in the Dark Years ere the coming of the kings. (<i>LotR</i> 780)	(1b) Heitä pidettiin gondorilaisina, mutta heidän verensä oli sekoittunutta, ja heidän joukossaan oli [1] <i>lyhyitä</i> ja <i>tummapintaisia</i> ihmisiä joiden esi-isät polveutuivat ehkä niistä ihmisistä jotka asustivat vuorten varjoissa Vuosina ennen kuninkaiden tuloa. (<i>TSH</i> 654)	[1] " <i>short</i> and <i>dark-skinned</i> "
(2a) Behind him marched proudly a dusty line of men, well-armed and bearing great battle-axes; grim-faced they were, and <i>shorter</i> and somewhat <i>swarthier</i> than any men that Pippin had yet seen in Gondor. 'Forlong!' men shouted. (<i>LotR</i> 801)	(2b) Hänen perässään marssi ylväästi pölyinen rivistö hyvin aseistautuneita miehiä joilla oli suuret sotakirveet; he olivat kasvoiltaan synkkiä, [1] <i>lyhyempiä</i> varreltaan ja <i>tummempia</i> hipiältään kuin ketkään Pippinin Gondorissa näkemät miehet. (<i>TSH</i> 672)	[1] " <i>shorter</i> body and <i>darker of skin</i> "
(3a) Before the crossing of the mountains the Hobbits had already become divided into three somewhat different breeds: Harfoots, Stoors,	(3b) Jo ennen kuin hobbitit ylittivät vuoret, he olivat jakautuneet kolmeen toisistaan eroavaan heimoon: karvajalat, väkevät, [1] helokesit.	[1] A neologism likely to be dericed from <i>heleä</i> / <i>helottaa</i> meaning 'bright', 'to shine', or 'clear' and <i>kesi</i> , 'skin' or 'thin outer part of leather.' While both

¹³⁶ This contrast is not used exclusively. For instance, Aragorn, one of the main protagonists, is described as "lean, dark, tall" (Tolkien 2007: 186), and his people are described as follows: "they were taller and darker than the Men of Bree" (Tolkien 2007: 139).

¹³⁷ In the tables in this section, *LotR* refers to pages in Tolkien (2009), while *TSH* refers to pages in Tolkien (1987). The third column contains notes on the translation. The emphases on some words are added to distinguish the translation of specific elements. Some comments on the Finnish terminology are also provided when deemed necessary.

and Fallohides. The Harfoots were <i>browner</i> of skin, <i>smaller</i> , and <i>shorter</i> , and they were beardless and bootless [...] The Fallohides were <i>fairer</i> of skin and also of hair, and they were <i>taller</i> and <i>slimmer</i> than the others; they were lovers of trees and of woodlands. (<i>LotR</i> 15)	Karvajalat olivat [2] <i>ruskeaihoisia</i> , <i>pieniä</i> ja <i>lyhyitä</i> , he olivat parrattomia eivätkä käyttäneet saappaita [...] Helokeseillä oli [3] <i>vaalea</i> iho ja tukka, he olivat <i>pitempiä</i> ja hoikempia kuin muut ja rakastivat puita ja metsämaita. (<i>TSH</i> 15)	are still in some use, the words are rather archaic, and at least <i>kesi</i> 's meaning may well be lost for many contemporary readers without the use of a dictionary. [2] " <i>brown-skinned, small and short</i> " [3] " <i>light skin and hair, they were taller and slimmer than others</i> "
(4a) It was in forgotten years long ago that Eorl the Young brought them out of the North, and their kinship is rather with the Bardings of Dale, and with the Beornings of the Wood, among whom may still be seen many men <i>tall</i> and <i>fair</i> , as are the Riders of Rohan. (<i>LotR</i> 451)	(4b) Unohdettuina aikoina kauan sitten Eorl Nuori toi heidät pohjoisesta, ja he ovat pikemminkin sukua Laakson bardilaisille ja Metsän beorningeille, joiden joukossa voi yhä tavata [1] <i>pitkiä</i> ja <i>vaaleita</i> ihmisiä, sellaisia kuin Rohanin ratsastajat. (<i>TSH</i> 378)	[1] " <i>tall and light-skinned</i> "

As dark skin does not denote evil as such in the source text (rather a lack of purity), additional signifiers are used in the source text to denote the evil of the orc irreals through colonial terms. In these cases, the sentence structure has been changed liberally at times to recreate the mock-archaic style in Finnish, but the individual signifiers of abjection have mainly been translated literally (with some exceptions):

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(5a) [A] huge orc-chieftain, almost man-high, clad in black mail from head to foot, leaped into the chamber; behind him his followers clustered in the doorway. <i>His broad flat face</i> was <i>swart</i> , his eyes were like	(5b) [H]yökkäsi kammioon valtaisa örkipäällikkö, melkein ihmismiehen mittainen ja mustassa haarniskassa kiireestä kantapäähän; sen seuralaiset jäivät tungeksimaan ovelle. [1] <i>Sillä</i> oli [2] <i>leveät ja litteät tummanpuhuvat</i>	[1] " <i>It</i> " [2] " <i>broad and flat darkish face</i> "

coals, and his tongue was red; he wielded a great spear. (<i>LotR</i> 343)	<i>kasvot</i> , silmät kuin hiilet ja punainen kieli; aseena sillä oli suuri peitsi. (<i>TSH</i> 288)	
(56a) Beyond the fire he saw swarming <i>black</i> figures: there seemed to be hundreds of orcs. They brandished spears and [1] scimitars which shone <i>red as blood</i> in the <i>firelight</i> . [2] <i>_Doom</i> , <i>doom_</i> rolled the <i>drum-beats</i> , growing louder and louder, <i>_doom</i> , <i>doom_</i> . (<i>LotR</i> 347)	(6b) Tulen takana hän näki vilistävän <i>mustia</i> hahmoja: örkkejä tuntui olevan sadoittain. Ne heiluttivat keihäitä ja [1] sapeleita, jotka hehkuivat <i>verenpunaisina tulen kajossa</i> . [2] <i>Dum duum jytisivät rummut</i> yhä kovemmin, <i>dum duum</i> . (<i>TSH</i> 292)	[1] Scimitars allude to outlandish weapons, and specifically to Arab or Asian weaponry, so they are a foreign element, even if they do not point to colonial depictions of Africa. [2] The explicit denotation of the noun “doom” is lost in the onomatopoeic translation.
(7a) There were four goblin-soldiers of greater stature, <i>swart</i> , <i>slant-eyed</i> , with thick legs and large hands. (<i>LotR</i> 435)	(7b) Kuolleiden joukossa oli neljä suurikokoista, [1] <i>tummaa</i> , [2] <i>viirusilmäistä</i> hiisisoturia, joilla oli paksut sääret ja suuret kädet. (<i>TSH</i> 365)	[1] “dark” [2] “streak-eyed” – used as derogatory term for East Asians.
(8a) In the twilight he saw a large <i>black</i> Orc, probably Uglúk, standing facing Grishnákh, a short <i>crook-legged creature</i> , very broad and with <i>long arms that hung almost to the ground</i> . (<i>LotR</i> 468)	(8b) Hämärässä hän näki suuren <i>mustan</i> örkin, joka oli varmaan Uglúk, ja se seisoi vastatusten Grishnákhin kanssa. Grishnákh oli lyhyenlöntä <i>vääräsäärinen</i> otus, hyvin tanakka, ja [1] <i>sillä oli pitkät kädet, jotka ulottuivat melkein maahan asti</i> . (<i>TSH</i> 392)	[1] “It”
(9a) The hobbits were left with the Isengarders: a grim <i>dark</i> band, four score at least of large, <i>swart</i> , <i>slant-eyed</i> Orcs with great bows and short broadbladed swords. A few of the larger and bolder Northerners	(9b) Hobitit jäivät rautapihalaisille, synkälle [1] <i>julmalle</i> joukolle, jossa oli vähintään kahdeksankymmentä isoa, [2] <i>mustaa</i> , <i>viirusilmäistä</i> örkkiä ja näillä suuret jouset ja leveäteräiset miekat. Muutama isompi ja	[1] “cruel” [2] “black”

remained with them. (<i>LotR</i> 471-472)	rohkeampi pohjoisen örkki jäi niiden mukaan. (<i>TSH</i> 396)	
(10a) [T]here was Grishnákh again, and at <i>his</i> back a couple of score of others like him: <i>long- armed crook-legged</i> Orcs. (<i>LotR</i> 472)	(10b) [S]iinä oli Grishnákh jälleen ja perässään [1] <i>sillä</i> oli neljäkymmentä muuta samanlaista <i>pitkäkätistä</i> ja <i>vääräsääristä</i> örkkiä. (<i>LotR</i> 397)	[1] “ <i>it</i> ”

Example (5a) describes a typical way to create the orc irrealis in the source text. In the source text, the orc is described as *swart*, with a *broad and flat face*, and a *spear*, a weapon typically used in portrayals of African blacks in colonial fiction. The translation (5b) stays mainly denotative with two interesting exceptions: *swart* is translated as *tummanpuhuva*, closer to ‘darkish’ than to ‘black’ or ‘dark’, and the *spear* is not translated as *keihäs* but as *peitsi*, typically associated with medieval European weaponry, ‘lance’ or ‘pike’ instead of ‘spear.’ In (6a), the source imagery contains multiple features used of Africans in colonial literature. *Spears* and *scimitars* allude to imagery of colonial descriptions from Africa and Asia, while *blackness*,¹³⁸ dancing in the darkness around a campfire while brandishing weapons, and the rhythmic sound of drums around a campfire allude to colonial descriptions of African tribalism.

In (6b), the target text has been translated nearly verbatim with no omissions or changes. Examples (7b)–(9b) display the same denotative translation strategy: the colonial signifiers are translated denotatively, with no change in the signifiers. Despite the denotative strategy, examples (5b), (8b), and (10b) show one strategic change in the target text compared to the source text, and it is upheld throughout the translation. Instead of Tolkien’s use of the gendered but personified pronoun *he* throughout the text, the target text utilizes the non-personified *se*, ‘it.’ While the source text also utilizes *it* irregularly to refer to an orc, the use of *se* is more systematic in the target text, emphasizing the dehumanization of orcs. However, it should be noted that Finnish *se* (‘it’) is also used of people, mainly in colloquial speech.¹³⁹ Even so, the translation makes a distinction, referring to humans as *hän* (‘he’ or ‘she’) as was common in literary Finnish at the time, while referring to orcs as *se*.

While most of the uses of *dark* and *black* in the source text refer to the lack of light and thus do not fall within the scope of this study, a common feature in the source text is

¹³⁸ However, it can be argued that the blackness of the creatures is tied to darkness in this example.

¹³⁹ There are some exceptions, in which *se* can be used in more formal speech, but these are not common.

using words relating to blackness or darkness in relation to the descriptions of orcs, which suggests the metaphorical concept of *dark is evil*.

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(11a) ‘And now it is clear that he is a <i>black</i> traitor. He has taken up with <i>foul folk</i> , with the <i>Orcs</i> .’ (LotR 494)	(11b) »Nyt on selvää että hän on <i>musta</i> luopio. Hän on ryhtynyt tekemisiin [1] <i>pahan kansan, örkkien kanssa</i> .» (TSH 415)	[1] “ <i>evil people</i> ”
(12a) ‘Are they Men he has ruined, or has he blended the races of <i>Orcs</i> and Men? That would be a <i>black evil</i> !’ (LotR 494–495)	(12b) »Ovatko ne ihmisiä jotka hän on turmellut, vai onko hän sekoittanut ihmisten ja örkkien suvut? Se olisi [1] <i>mustaakin mustempaa pahuutta!</i> » (TSH 415)	[1] “ <i>evil blacker than black</i> ”
(13a) [I]t was boiling and crawling with <i>black</i> shapes, some squat and broad, some tall and grim, with high helmets and <i>sable</i> ¹⁴⁰ shields. Hundreds and hundreds more were pouring over the Dike and through the breach. The <i>dark</i> tide flowed up to the walls from cliff to cliff. (LotR 556)	(13b) [S]e kiehui ja kuhisi <i>mustia</i> otuksia joista osa oli vanterria ja leveitä, osa pitkiä ja uhkaavia, niillä oli korkeat kypärät ja <i>mustat</i> kilvet. Niitä tulvi sadoittain lisää yli Vallin ja aukosta sisään. [1] <i>Mustana</i> nousuvetenä ne virtasivat muureja kohti kivi kiveltä. (TSH 467)	[1] “ <i>black tide</i> ”

As shown in examples (11b)–(13b), the blackness or darkness of evil is translated denotatively even in cases where blackness has been used in relation to orcs to connote evil. In (12b), the target text emphasizes moral blackness even further: “evil blacker than black.” A similar strategy of direct word-to-word denotation is used in the target text in descriptions of the first evil characters encountered by the protagonists, the Black Riders. In the source text, the text introduces the Black Riders as riders dressed all in black with their faces “shadowed and invisible” under a hood (Tolkien 2009: 88). However, in the dialogue and further mentions, the blackness shifts from a description of clothing to a generic description of blackness:

¹⁴⁰ As a color, in heraldic use, black tone used in shields, as well as in in clothing, and black garments.

Source Text	Target Text
(14a) ‘These <i>black</i> men,’ said the landlord lowering his voice. ‘They’re looking for Baggins, and if they mean well, then I’m a hobbit.’ (<i>LotR</i> 183)	(14b) »Niitä <i>mustia</i> miehiä», isäntä sanoi ääntään madaltaen. »Ne etsivät Reppulia ja jos niillä on hyvät aiheet niin minä olen hobitti.» (<i>TSH</i> 155)
(15a) ‘[T]wo <i>black</i> men were at the door asking for a hobbit called Baggins. Nob’s hair was all stood on end. I bid the <i>black</i> fellows be off, and slammed the door on them.’ (<i>LotR</i> 184)	(15b) »[O]vella oli kaksi miestä jotka kyselivät Reppuli-nimistä hobittia. Nobin tukka seisoj pystyssä. Minä käskin <i>mustia</i> tyyppejä poistumaan ja läimäytin oven kiinni niiden nenän edestä.» (<i>TSH</i> 155)
(16a) ‘No <i>black</i> man shall pass my doors, while I can stand on my legs.’ (<i>LotR</i> 185)	(16b) »Yksikään <i>musta</i> mies ei kulje minun ovestani niin kauan kuin minä jalkeillani seison.» (<i>TSH</i> 156)

In the source text, the use of blackness as a descriptive of evil links orcs, black riders, and other creatures of evil to a physical description of blackness, and the denotative translation strategies make the connection in the target text. However, there is one notable shift in the translation strategy. While for orcs, darkness of skin is translated in the target text mainly denotatively as shown above, in the description of antagonistic humans and half-orcs, the target text slightly downplays the role of skin color:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(17a) But there was one <i>swarthy</i> Bree-lander, who stood looking at them with a knowing and half-mocking expression that made them feel very uncomfortable. (<i>LotR</i> 176)	(17b) Mutta eräs [1] <i>tummaverinen</i> briiläinen katseli heitä naamallaan tietäväinen ja puolipilkallinen ilme, joka teki heidän olonsa epämukavaksi. (<i>TSH</i> 149)	[1] “ <i>dark-skinned</i> ”; Literally ‘dark-blooded,’ but usually refers to dark skin and/or hair.
(19a) For a moment he caught a glimpse of <i>swarthy</i> men in red running down the slope some way off with green-clad warriors leaping after them, hewing them down as they fled. (<i>LotR</i> 687)	(19b) Hän näki vilaukselta [1] <i>mustanpuhuvia</i> punapukuisia miehiä, jotka juoksivat rinnettä alas vähän matkan päässä, ja niiden takana ryntäsi vihreäpukuisia, jotka hakkasivat niitä maahan minkä ennättivät. (<i>TSH</i> 577)	[1] “ <i>darkish</i> ”

(20a) ‘Still, you may at the least disturb the Orcs and <i>Swarthy Men</i> from their feasting in the White Tower.’ (<i>LotR</i> 831)	(20b) »Voitte sitten yrittää estää [1] <i>tummajaisia</i> ja örkkejä pitämästä pitojaan Valkoisessa Tornissa.» (<i>TSH</i> 697)	[1] “ <i>darklings</i> ”
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Especially in (20a–b), the translation of *Swarthy Men* as *tummajaisia* is worth noting. Although the word could be translated back to English as ‘darklings,’ it is a neologism that could refer to anything dark, thus removing the link to humanity still present in the source text.¹⁴¹ In another contrast to the denotative strategies employed in the translation of *dark* and *black* in the orc irrealis, Tolkien’s use of the metaphor of *fair is good* has been significantly downplayed in the target text. In most cases where Tolkien uses the term *fair*, the connotations of skin or hair color have been downplayed or removed in the target text, which affects the explicit juxtaposition created by Tolkien between the fair protagonists and the dark antagonists. This seems partially due to Finnish lacking a word that has the same connotations of beauty and pale color as *fairness*, which requires the translator to choose between the meanings or use multiple descriptions to replace one source description. Moreover, traditionally, in the Finnish cultural semiosphere, paleness has been linked to ill health or malnourishment, making the typical words for paleness inappropriate due to such different connotations. However, the strategy employed by the translators has mainly removed the connection between *fair* and *white*, thus lessening the contrast between *white* and *dark* in the target text:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(21a) ‘But this one is taller than some and <i>fairer than most</i> , and he has a cleft in his chin: perky chap with a bright eye. (<i>LotR</i> 182)	(21b) “Mutta tämä on tavallista pidempi ja [1] <i>poikkeuksellisen hauskannäköinen</i> , ja hänellä on kuoppa leuassa: terhakka ja kirkassilmäinen veikko.” (<i>TSH</i> 154)	[1] “ <i>exceptionally handsome</i> ” or “ <i>exceptionally nice looking</i> ”
(22a) <i>fair</i> young elf-queen clad in living flowers (<i>LotR</i> 138)	(22b) [1] <i>kaunis</i> nuori haltiakuningatar eläviin kukkiin verhoutuneena (<i>TSH</i> 118)	[1] “ <i>beautiful</i> ”
(23a) Where now is Boromir the <i>Fair</i> ? (<i>LotR</i> 437)	(23b) Mihin on jäänyt [1] <i>kaunis</i> Boromir? (<i>TSH</i> 367)	[1] “ <i>beautiful</i> ”

¹⁴¹ *Tummajainen* may be a play on words as it rhymes with *kummajainen*, best translated as ‘freak’ or ‘oddity.’

(24a) head so proud, his face so <i>fair</i> , his limbs they laid to rest (<i>LotR</i> 438)	(24b) tuo ylpeä pää ja [1] <i>kauniit</i> kasvot jo lepoon vaipuivat (<i>TSH</i> 367)	[1] “ <i>beautiful</i> ”
(25a) After him they rode: a long line of mail-clad men, swift, shining, fell and <i>fair</i> to look upon. (<i>LotR</i> 451)	(25b) Ratsastajat seurasivat häntä: pitkä jono sota-asuisia ihmismiehiä, nopeita, kimaltavia, hurjia ja [1] <i>kauniita</i> katsella. (<i>TSH</i> 378)	[1] “ <i>beautiful</i> ”
(26a) Legolas already lay motionless, his <i>fair</i> hands folded upon his breast, his eyes unclosed, blending living night and deep dream, as is the way with Elves. (<i>LotR</i> 463)	(26b) Legolas makasi jo haltioiden tapaan liikkumatta [1] <i>kauniit</i> kädet rinnalla, silmät auki, niin että valveyö ja syvä uni sekoittuivat. (<i>TSH</i> 389)	[1] “ <i>beautiful</i> ”
(27a) Very <i>fair</i> was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. (<i>LotR</i> 537)	(27b) [1] <i>Kauniit</i> , hyvin <i>kauniit</i> olivat hänen kasvonsa, ja hänen pitkät hiuksensa olivat kuin kultainen virta. (<i>TSH</i> 452)	[1] “ <i>Beautiful, very beautiful</i> ”
(28a) ...in the full light of day beheld Éowyn, Lady of Rohan, and thought her <i>fair</i> , <i>fair</i> and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood. (<i>LotR</i> 537)	(28b) ...Éowynin, Rohanin neidon, ja päivän kirkkaassa valossa hän piti tätä [1] <i>kauniina</i> , <i>kauniina</i> ja kylmänä kuin kalvas kevään aamu joka ei ole vielä puhjennut kukkeuteen. (<i>TSH</i> 452)	[1] “ <i>beautiful, beautiful</i> ”

In another case, the whiteness enhanced through repetition is lessened through omission:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(30a) <i>Snow-white!</i> <i>Snow-white!</i> O Lady clear! (<i>LotR</i> 92)	(30b) Oi kuningatar, [1] <i>lumenvalka</i> niin (<i>TSH</i> 81)	[1] “ <i>snow-white</i> ”

Only in cases where the source text clearly describes the skin color of a race or nation is *fair* retained as referring to color. Similarly, while the whiteness in *fair* is downplayed in the translation, *white*, when used to clearly describe skin color, is retained:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(31a) with her <i>white</i> arms spread out across it (<i>LotR</i> 138)	(31a) levitti [1] <i>valkeat</i> kätensä oven eteen (<i>TSH</i> 118)	[1] “ <i>white hands</i> ”
(32a) her <i>white</i> arms and clear face were flawless and smooth (<i>LotR</i> 243)	(32b) hänen [1] <i>valkeat</i> kätensä ja <i>valkoiset</i> kasvonsa olivat sileät ja virheettömät (<i>TSH</i> 203)	[1] “her <i>white hands</i> and <i>white face</i> ”; as a term, ‘ <i>valkea</i> ’ is more literary than ‘ <i>valkoinen</i> ’
(33a) She lifted up her <i>white</i> arms, and spread out her hands toward the East in a gesture of rejection and denial. (<i>LotR</i> 384)	(33b) Hän kohotti [1] <i>valkeat</i> kätensä ja levitti ne itää kohti torjuvasti ja kieltäen. (<i>TSH</i> 322)	[1] “ <i>white arms</i> ”

This contrast between white and black is, however, maintained in the translations of the orcs’ depiction of humans in their dialogue as *white-skins* or *valkonaamat*:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(34a) ‘Go on running,’ said Uglúk. ‘What do you think? Sit on the grass and wait for the Whiteskins to join the picnic?’ (<i>LotR</i> 470)	(34b) »Jatketaan juoksemista», sanoi Uglúk. »Mitä te luulitte? Istutaan ruohikossa ja odotetaan että [1] <i>valkonaamat</i> [2] tulee mukaan huviretkelle, vai?» (<i>TSH</i> 394)	[1] “ <i>white-faces</i> ” [2] lack of possessive suffix
(35a) ‘If you’re afraid of the <i>Whiteskins</i> , run! Run!’ (<i>LotR</i> 472)	(35b) »Jos pelkäätte [1] <i>valkonaamoja</i> niin juoskaa! Juoskaa!» (<i>TSH</i> 396)	[1] “ <i>white-faces</i> ”
(36a) ‘The <i>Whiteskins</i> are coming. What’s happened to your precious Nazgûl?’ (<i>LotR</i> 473)	(36b) [1] » <i>Valkonaamat</i> on tulossa. Mitä sinun <i>kalliille Nazgûlille</i> [2] on tapahtunut?» (<i>TSH</i> 397)	[1] “ <i>white-faces</i> ” [2] lack of possessive suffix

As noted by Bianchi (2008: 46), most speech in dialect tends to be regarded as “unintelligible” by those who are not familiar with it. Examples (34b) and (36b) show subtle translated signs of added markers of colloquial language use in the target text. In the source text, the orcs speak in a pointedly unsophisticated and at times vulgar register, in the translation their lack of sophistication is shown through markers that signify Finnish

colloquial speech.¹⁴² This is presented through markers such as the lack of possessive suffixes and added colloquial inflections (see examples 37–39). Both in the source and target text, patterns of “tough talk” (Bianchi 2008: 48) can be viewed as gendered voice, which enhances the masculinity of the orcs and grounds them more deeply in the stereotypical territory of masculine evil. The same strategy of adding linguistic markers of colloquialism and vulgar “tough talk” in the translation of orcish speech occurs in much of the dialogue:

Source Text	Target Text	Translation Notes
(37a) 'Rest while you can, little fool!' he said then to Pippin, in the Common Speech, which he made almost as hideous as his own language. 'Rest while you can! We'll find a use for your legs before long. You'll wish you had got none before we get home.' (<i>LotR</i> 466)	(37b) »Lepää kun kerta voit, pikku hoopoi!» se sanoi sitten Pippinille yhteiskielellä, jonka se sai kuulostamaan melkein yhtä iljettävältä kuin omansa. »Lepää kun kerta voit! Kohta löytyy [1] <i>sinun jaloille</i> käyttöä. Vielä sinä toivot, ettei sinulla <i>jalkoja</i> [2] <i>oliskaan</i> , ennen kuin [2] <i>me päästään</i> kotiin.» (<i>TSH</i> 391)	[1] lack of possessive suffix [2] colloquial inflection
(38a) 'We are the fighting Uruk-Hai! We slew the great warrior. We took prisoners. We are the servants of Saruman the Wise, the White Hand: the Hand that gives us man's-flesh to eat. [...] I am Uglúk. I have spoken.' (<i>LotR</i> 467)	(38b) »Me [1] <i>ollaan uruk-hai</i> ja <i>me tapellaan</i> ! Me [1] <i>surmattiin</i> se suuri sotauroho. Me [1] <i>otettiin</i> vangit. Me [1] <i>palvellaan</i> Saruman Viisasta, Valkoista Kättä: <i>sitä Kättä</i> joka antaa meille ihmislihaa [1] <i>syötäväks</i> . [...] Minä olen Uglúk. Olen puhunut.» (<i>TSH</i> 392)	[1] colloquial inflection
(39a) 'Maggots!' jeered the Isengarders. 'You're cooked. The Whiteskins will catch you and eat you. They're coming!' (<i>LotR</i> 473)	(39b) »Madot!» ilkkuivat rautapihalaiset. »Olette väsyneitä! <i>Valkonaamat</i> [1] <i>saa teidät kiinni</i> ja syö! Ne tulee!» (<i>TSH</i> 398)	[1] colloquial inflection (singular instead of plural)

¹⁴² Finnish colloquial markers are of course, different from the English ones, comprising here mainly the dropping of possessive suffixes and use of colloquial inflections.

(40a) ‘They’re not to be killed, unless the filthy Whiteskins break through.’ (<i>LotR</i> 475)	(40b) »Niitä ei saa tappaa, ellei saastaiset valkonaamat murtaudu [1] läpi.» (<i>TSH</i> 399)	[1] colloquial inflection
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In the source text, the linguistic simplicity of the orcs is created through simple sentence structures and vocabulary associated partly with the colonized other and partly with the working class. While phrases such as “I am Uglúk. I have spoken” (Tolkien 2009: 467) and “The Whiteskins will catch you and eat you” (Tolkien 2009: 473) suggest colonial portrayals of African blacks, phrases such as “join the picnic?” (Tolkien 2009: 470) and “if you don’t want the fun to begin right now, keep your trap shut, see” (Tolkien 2009: 944) evoke working class speech. In the target text, as class distinctions between registers would have been less clear (due to the fact that the British arguably have had a more pronounced class division, especially during the early twentieth century), the translation strategy has required the addition of colloquialisms and optional grammatical markers, such as deletion of possessive suffixes in addition to keeping the simple sentence structures and the references to cannibalism and skin color distinctions. As noted by Englund Dimitrova (2007: 62), there is a “tendency either completely to omit dialectic markers in translation, or to replace them with markers of colloquial language.” In other words, the translation strategies used for the orcish dialogue are commonplace in contemporary translation of fiction. In effect, in Englund Dimitrova’s (2007: 60) terms, in the target text, the dialect markers are removed, while the colloquial effect is achieved mainly through lexical markers such as the dropped possessive suffix and the use of singular verb form for plural subjects. As these markers are found only in the speech of orcs, their contrast to the stylistic level of the text and the dialogue of the other characters is pronounced.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, Juva’s translation strategies in this specific target text focus on bringing the signifiers of abjection to the target language by verbatim equivalence – word by word, with individual words being the translation units. The denotative equivalence has two notable strategic exceptions: the grammatical markers and colloquialisms added to the orcish dialogue and the decreased contrast between *fair* and *dark* by translating *fair* repeatedly without its color-coded connotations.

In the source text, the epic style of the narrative is partly created by a modern, mock-anachronistic style based on florid but modern prose. The exception to this style is the dialogue of orcs. This is presented in part in the vein of fictional colonial depictions of Africans speaking English with simple sentence structures and references to cannibalism and willing slavery, and in part as lower class English, rife with slang and tough talk. At times, this shift from colonial to working class language occurs in the same scene and by the same speaker, as, for example, in Uglúk’s and Grishnákh’s dialogue (Tolkien 2009:

466–467). As class distinction and colloquial speech are expressed in different ways in Finnish, the translators have chosen a strategy of using markers such as the deletion of possessive suffixes, singular verbs for plural subjects, and opting for colloquialisms in order to indicate the difference between the orcish dialogue (in ways common in colloquial Finnish) and the dialogue of other characters.

Although the omission of connotations relating to color in terms of *fair* can be seen as a selective local strategy occasioned by the word's polysemy in English, the overall effect of the omissions affects the target text considerably by weakening the *dark-fair* juxtaposition prevalent in the text. This weakening can be seen as a global strategy within the text. Although the direct *black-white* contrast is kept intact, often denotatively, the removal of a large portion of the *dark-fair* connotative contrast affects the reading of the orc irrealis (from *within* the text but *outside* the orc irrealis as such).

In the translation of Tolkien's trilogy, abjection is retained in the target text through a recurrent local translation strategy that has turned into a global one. It retains descriptions through verbatim equivalent translation in cases in which irrealia contain abjective, racially, or colonialistically loaded signifiers. The verbatim strategy of translation seems to mainly affect the "evil" irrealia in the target text. That is, the darkness of orcs and other evil characters is retained, but the fairness of "good" characters (in both senses of fairness) is less pronounced than in the original text. Further studies discussing the translation of original irrealia compared to irrealia with already commonly recognized signifiers would be required to chart other differences.

As this case study on the translation of signifiers of abjection is based on only one text in only one source-target language pair, no generalizations can be made. However, the mechanisms analyzed here can be used in further research to study translations between similar secondary semiospheres to illustrate how the translation of irrealia works.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Through their form and contents (including irrealia), the genres of the fantastic have an extraordinary capability to portray the fears and hopes of our times in a fantastic guise. Whether zombie fiction, a fantasy mass epic of politics and dragons, or a tale of a future society run by posthuman minds, the genres of the fantastic tend to comment on our world and its societies through irrealia often grounded in phenomena from actual real world cultural semiospheres. In the heart of the fantastic lies the basic juxtaposition between human and nonhuman, which defines humanity through the actions and appearance of the nonhuman, and vice versa. However, this juxtaposition is often based on a clash between human and human, with the alien more or less a coat of paint on the dehumanized Other. What is deemed alien is by definition not human, and if the alien is given signifiers from some part of humanity that has been abjectified in the main cultural semiosphere, the process not only abjectifies the irrealia but further dehumanizes the Other.

In this study, my aim has been to provide a framework of tools and terminology for analyzing this interaction between prejudice in real-world semiospheres and the genres of the fantastic, as well as case studies on specific irrealia. In addition, I have applied the analysis to a case study on translation of a seminal work of fantasy.

In chapter 1, I introduced the key concepts of the study, tying them to the concepts of abjection, irrealia, and transmedial presentation, as well as key concepts in semiotic translation. Furthermore, I discussed the aims and structure of the study, and provided a plan and a map for the thesis.

In chapter 2, I provided a semiotic framework for combining the concepts of irrealia, semiospheres, and hyperdiegesis in order to analyze the evolution and translation of irrealia in fantastic texts. My primary aims were to discuss fantastic literature as part of a transmedial field and to show that the analysis of irrealia in fantastic fiction must go beyond literature. Hence, a useful framework for future studies in fantastic semiospheres was presented. My secondary aim was to discuss how, due to the evolution of cultural semiospheres and their irrealia (and realia), any specific irrealia must be examined based on their evolution. My other aims were to discuss the translation of irrealia between the secondary semiospheres of the fantastic within different main cultural semiospheres and to display how the dialogue between the main and secondary semiospheres affects the translation and translatability of irrealia.

In chapter 3, I described the development of the semiospheres of the fantastic through the histories of the genres, concentrating on their development through a blend of highbrow and pulp fiction and the various media in which the texts have evolved. In order to examine the racial stereotypes in abjectified irrealia (in chapter 4), I introduced examples of how racialized and colonialist stereotypes, both period and intentional, influenced and affected the evolution of early pulp fantasy – and thus, the genres of the fantastic.

In chapter 4, I examined four specific irrealia: orcs, dwarves, gnomes, and goblins, all originating in the early half of the twentieth century.¹⁴³ As shown in the case studies of the four irrealia, the source racialized allusions direct and affect the development of the irrealia even when the irrealia have become standard tropes in the fantastic arts. In the case of orcs, while the irrealis originally has evolved along its original negative signifiers, it has also acquired positive postcolonial readings in some fantastic semiospheres, thus in effect turning from a single irrealis to multiple overlapping irrealia. As for the case of goblins, the evolution of the irrealis has brought along further ties to its real world racialized stereotype – allusions that did not exist in its first renditions in the hyperdiegeses of fantasy. The two other irrealia I examined (gnomes and dwarves) have both shed negative signifiers relating to their stereotypical point of origin in the main culture. Interestingly, when evolving as negatively perceived irrealia, each examined irrealis added both negative *physical* and *cultural* signifiers attached to the racial stereotype of their origin, yet when evolving as positively perceived, the irrealia kept their *physical* signifiers,¹⁴⁴ while negative *cultural* signifiers were either removed or reattached to another racial stereotype.

In chapter 5, I examined the translation of irrealia in another cultural semiosphere in the translation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* into Finnish as *Taru sormusten herrasta*. The translation is a seminal one in the history of Finnish fantasy, since it introduced several irrealia, including orcs, into the Finnish semiosphere of fantasy. Here, the signifiers related to the abject irrealia were mainly translated denotatively, thus recreating the abjection in detail, with two exceptions that affect the translated irrealia and its allusive anchors. Most importantly, in the dialogue by orcish characters, elements suggesting British working-class speech were discarded, since translating the class based colloquialisms would not have resulted in a similar result in the target language due to cultural and language differences. Instead, they were turned into general colloquialisms with markers that gave the impression that the orcs speak mainly colloquial language or have rudimentary language skills.

While the signifiers related to racial stereotypes and darkness were kept intact in the translation, many signifiers associated with fair skin color of the protagonists or “good” characters were lost. This was possibly due to the lack in the target language of a one-word term matching the connotations of *fair*. The result led to both abject and non-abject irrealia being described in an equivalent way, while non-irrealia elements were translated less literally. On the other hand, it may have lessened the original contrast, as the concept of “fair is good” comes across as less pronounced in the translation. However, as the case study was intended to provide an example of the mechanics of how irrealia have been translated in a seminal work that defines concepts in a target cultural

¹⁴³ That is, they have kept their physical signifiers in the genres of the fantastic. All but orcs have existed in one form or another in folklore and fairy tales.

¹⁴⁴ There is the questionable exception of the orcish skin color change to green, which could be viewed as postcolonial commentary.

semiosphere, it cannot be used to make generalizations on whether the mechanics apply to the translation of irrealia between other language and culture pairs. Further studies are needed to examine potential parallels in other translations, including translations that have been made into more saturated semiospheres.

What the results of both the case studies of irrealia in fantasy (chapter 4) and translating irrealia (chapter 5) show is that semiospheric containment affects the development and translation of the irrealia, even if by different mechanisms. As shown in chapter 4, in intra-semiospheric development, signifiers based on racial stereotypes are attached to irrealia depending on the abjection of the irrealia. The more abject an irrealis is, the more stereotypical racial signifiers it may accrue during its development in various hyperdiegeses.

The different developments of the orc and the goblin irrealia seem to suggest the conclusion that a vaguely defined exclusive irrealis can evolve by accruing additional signifiers based on a negative signified within a main cultural semiosphere. Thus, in the case of goblins, a few initial signifiers that are typically used to denote Jews in antisemitic discourse may lead authors, readers, viewers, and players to develop the irrealis by saturating its gaps based on notions that are typically associated with antisemitism in their main cultural semiosphere. In this way, the saturation process functions both within and across semiospheres: the gaps that exist in an irrealis are filled by authors, readers, viewers, and players through information from both the semiosphere of the fantastic and their own main cultural semiosphere. This would explain why the goblin irrealis has, in multiple hyperdiegeses and under multiple names, evolved in the same direction, and why antisemitic signifiers have been added to the irrealis over time.

Furthermore, this double evolution also seems to hold for all the other examined irrealia. The dwarf irrealis originally had explicit links to an existing stereotype of Jews, but during its inclusive and positive development, it has switched its links in the main cultural semiosphere to stereotypical presentation of Scots in their language and culture. The irrealis of orcs, after developing as an exclusive irrealia, has partially retained its links to colonialist imagery of African blacks in the main cultural semiospheres, and has, in some hyperdiegeses, been radically deconstructed according to those links. The irrealis of goblins has been treated as an exclusive one throughout its evolution, and even though there have been positive and inclusive portrayals, the irrealis has accrued further antisemitic signifiers. Even the irrealis of gnomes – with no initial allusive links to racial stereotypes – has, in cases of negative development, been renamed as a negatively portrayed irrealis (goblins) with links to negative racial portrayals.

In semiotic terms, this phenomenon could be described as each of the irrealia having a “double” signified – one linked to the fantastic concept, the other to an allusive link to a racial stereotype in the main cultural semiosphere. In three of the four discussed irrealia (orcs, goblins, and dwarves), the process is evident, and even in the fourth (gnomes), the switch to goblins, when antisemitic signifiers are added, points to the fact that irrealia often are doubly signified, as displayed in Figure 18:

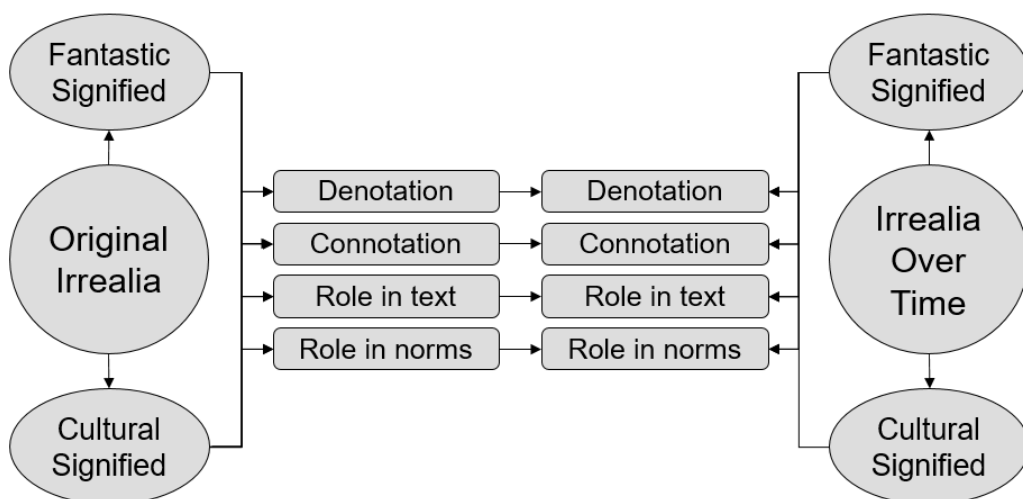


Figure 18 – Irrealia and double signifieds

Let me note that while these analyses are intended to show the usefulness of my method, I am not trying to make generalisations on the basis of these few examples. Furthermore, it is evident that three of the four selected irrealia had either direct or indirect links to racial stereotypes in their main cultural semiospheres at their point of origin, which skews the results and makes it impossible to claim that this kind of development would always occur in the irrealia of fantastic races. However, further examination of irrealia commonly used in the fantastic and based on racial or racist stereotypes, such as *northern barbarians*, *Vikings*, *Gypsies*, or *Arabs* should provide more comprehensive results on whether the mechanism of double signification functions more generally.

As this interdisciplinary study has shown, the arts of the fantastic have mechanisms for defining humanity by determining what is not human. It is my hope that further studies will shed more light on the mechanics of the development of abjection and the nonhuman, especially in the case of other marginalized groups, whether ethnic, cultural, or subcultural. Of particular interest is the accumulation of cultural signifiers, that is, how other monsters of the fantastic have been constructed on stereotypical notions, and what signifiers have been appropriated from the ethnic Other.

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